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THE HEART OF SPAIN



BY STEWART DICK

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THE HEART OF SPAIN





PUERTA DEL SOL

*From a water-colour
by the Author*

THE HEART OF SPAIN

An Artist's Impressions of Toledo

BY

STEWART DICK

AUTHOR OF "ARTS AND CRAFTS OF OLD JAPAN"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR
IN COLOUR AND BLACK AND WHITE



T. N. FOULIS
23 BEDFORD ST., LONDON,
W.C. & AT EDINBURGH 1907



To

W. R.

**A SOUVENIR
OF A HOLIDAY
IN SPAIN**

PREFACE

THIS little volume is neither a history nor a guide-book. It is merely a chronicle of things seen, a record of personal impressions.

On my first flying visit Toledo cast its spell about me, and the bands have only drawn tighter with each succeeding stay. And my whole object has been to convey, if possible, to the reader, by pen and pencil, something at least of the city's haunting charm.

The architect can easily find elsewhere the details of the historic monuments with which it is filled. The archæologist will refer to more competent authorities as regards its chequered history. It has been sufficient for me to surrender myself to the spirit of the place; to wander about its tortuous streets, to linger in its churches, to dream amidst its ruins.

PREFACE

Professor Cossio, the Spanish historian and art critic, says: 'If the stranger has only one day to spend in Spain, let him spend it in Toledo.' It is well said, but a day is nothing. One wishes to stay weeks, and months, and years.

A word as to practical details. The visitor of a day will certainly want a guide of some sort, if only to show him the way from one place to another. The ordinary so-called guides who infest Toledo can do little more than this; and if nothing more is required, one of the persistent urchins who annoy you will do as well as an older and more expensive vagabond. Competent guides are few, but I can recommend Mlle. Salud Hernandez, Calle del Comercio 6, as not only knowing Toledo well, but understanding more of its beauties than can be learned by rote.

As to hotels, the 'Castilla' is said to be the best, but for the humble artist its tariff is prohibitive. The 'Toledano' and the

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'Lino' are both comfortable, both cheap, and in both I have been treated in a kind and homely fashion, each succeeding visit bringing a warmer welcome.

My thanks are due to Señor Beruete for his kindness in allowing me to reproduce the portrait of El Greco in his possession, and also to Professor Cossio for much interesting and valuable information.

S. D.

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THE HEART OF SPAIN

CHAPTER I

A ROUNDABOUT JOURNEY

It was early on a bright morning in May when I stood by the Bridge of Alcántara and looked up at the heights of Toledo. The air was clear and crisp and cool, the blue of the sky still retained the dewy delicacy of the morning, and the old city above lay in the sunshine hardly yet awake.

A piled-up mass of clustered buildings, crowded together on a rocky hill, and crowned by the huge square bulk of the Alcázar: below, a rampart of massive walls: and lower still, steep crags at the foot of which, sweeping slowly, the turgid yellow Tagus. That is the first impression of Toledo. It stands aloof, a grim fortress city, frowning down on the plain below. Spanning

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the gorge of the Tagus, with its majestic arch high above the stream, is the great Bridge of Alcántara, guarded by strong towers, and dominated by an old Moorish castle on the adjoining hill.

But this morning the beauty of the hour softened the austere grandeur of the city, and the old bridge was alive with twittering swallows, wheeling and circling in a thousand mazy whirls. Their half-built nests spotted the huge span of the central arch where it glowed yellow with golden light reflected from the water.

A strange thought that this grim old bridge, standing firm and unmoved through the centuries, has a use that its designers never took into account. Year after year it gives housing to these little wanderers. The traffic rolls overhead, the bridge resounds with the tramp of armed men, the Moors are driven out, the Spaniards pass in, the life fades from the busy capital, till now it



TOLEDO FROM ABOVE THE BRIDGE OF ALCÁNTARA

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

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seems only to dream of its ancient greatness; but through it all the swallows come and go, build their nests and rear their young, all absorbed in their own busy little world. Now it is building time; in a little while each nest will have its three or four eggs of a delicate pinky white; then the feeding of the young—(I wonder how the young birds learn to fly with that perilous stream below)—and in the autumn a lingering farewell and a flight to climes where the winter is milder though scarce sunnier than in Spain.

The morning seems the busy time for the swallows. I passed during the heat of the day, but they were silent then, taking their siesta like all good Spaniards.

An hour or two later I was down by the river-side below the bridge, and here they came to pick up the mud for their nests. But one little fellow came floating down the stream idly enough, a little bundle of glistening black feathers, the sharp-pointed wings

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swaying aimlessly in the current, glimpses of the white breast appearing as it bobbed to and fro. What was the story of the little tragedy? Had it struck against the bridge in its headlong flight, had some boy thrown a stone, or was it the victim of some deadly private feud? It was all one, its little history was finished now.

The yellow river flowed slowly and sullenly on, the weir a little further down kept up its continual drowsy murmur, the other swallows came and went, I seemed the only part of Nature that took any notice.

But as I stood by the Bridge of Alcántara, watching the swallows in that clear sparkling morning air, it was borne in on me that I had had nothing to eat that morning, and no dinner the previous night, and that I was ravenously hungry. For I had come to Toledo by a roundabout way—natural enough, but seemingly unusual.

I had got away with a rush from Madrid

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—garish, tawdry, vulgar Madrid—by the last train on the Saturday night. ‘Train for Badajos and Toledo,’ so the placard on the platform said; but though this might have warned me that there was a change somewhere, for Toledo is on a little branch line, all my thoughts were of the associations of that wonderful name Badajos. My mind was away back to one of my first story-books—*Our Redcoats and Bluejackets*—and the bloody siege of Badajos. The assaults of the breaches, the forlorn hopes, the mowing down of hundreds after hundreds, the final triumph, and the picture of the stern Iron Duke bursting into tears over the sacrifice of his gallant soldiers. And this curious, slow, antediluvian, matter-of-fact train, puffing jerkily along over a very badly laid line, was bound for Badajos! So musing I settled myself in my corner and pulled out the ‘Bocadilla’—a roll with a slice of ham inside—which I had snatched in the refreshment-

A ROUNDABOUT JOURNEY

room as a substitute for dinner. When suddenly a voice was heard, 'If you would move your grip further along the rack, sir, we should have a little more light.'

The speaker was a shrivelled-up little man, with a keen, nervous face. He had rather a weak mouth; on his chin, just below the lip, was that absurd little tuft of hair known as an Imperial, and he wore a particularly vile cloth cap. No Spaniard, of course. He might have been an Englishman, but the word 'grip' settled the question. 'A Yankee,' thought I; 'but why that little tuft on the chin? Curious!'

He soon shut up his Baedeker and began to talk, and, seeing my easel and sketching outfit, began to talk art. With true British reserve I was rather unresponsive at first—besides, his cap annoyed me very much—but to my surprise I found he knew what he was talking about. And when he offered me his whisky flask—a Bocadilla is very dry eating

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—I really had to thaw. Soon we were deep in the delights of the Museo del Prado and the miracle of Velasquez. So the time passed and the great wide landscape slowly darkened. At length, after two hours, I began to think we should be somewhere near Toledo, but on looking out of the window, I had an uneasy sense that the range of mountains which I saw on the right ought really to have been on our left. Uneasiness soon gave place to certainty, for inquiry from our fellow-passengers elicited the information that Toledo was 'pasado'—we should have changed at the last stop.

But it was only a little wayside station, very dark. No one had come to check the tickets; no one had called 'Change here for Toledo,' or its Spanish equivalent; no one had done anything and neither had we.

However, we were both philosophic—for the Yankee too was bound for Toledo—and 10.30 P.M. found us dumped down on a bare

A R O U N D A B O U T J O U R N E Y
railway platform some twelve miles from Toledo, inquiring from an interested group of railway employees as to the possibility of obtaining a bed.

The station itself was no good. The best they could offer us was a seat by the fire in the booking office. My companion had a wild idea of hiring a donkey for our luggage, and, with a guide, tramping across country to Toledo, but we dismissed the scheme as impracticable. An alternative proposed by our friends of the station seemed feasible. It was to leave our luggage there and walk some three kilometres along the line. We should find there a siding, and, a kilometre to the right, a little town where perchance we might find a bed.

So behold us, a Scotchman and a Yankee, perfect strangers two hours before, tramping together along a lonely railway track in the centre of Spain in search of a bed ; sharing fraternally the contents of the Ameri-

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can's flask, and incidentally discussing Spanish railways, customs, arts, and things in general.

After half-an-hour's walk we reached our siding, and, sure enough, a good road turned off to the right, following which for about half a mile, we came to a little town sound asleep in the moonlight. Never was there a more peaceful scene. The wide street was empty. On each side were low whitewashed houses, with spacious courtyards, entered by great doors studded with iron nails. No lights burned in the tiny windows, and our footsteps were the only sounds that broke the stillness. The clear silvery moonlight fell softly on the whitewash, which glowed in a delicate harmony of mother-of-pearl—faint purples, dim blues, and pale greeny yellows. It was as delicate and ethereal as a melody of Chopin. But at last the barking of a dog, roused by our approach, broke the spell. Then in the distance we heard the

A ROUNDABOUT JOURNEY

tinkle of a guitar and voices singing one of these strange barbaric ditties that seem to be a heritage from the Moors. It was a party of youths, gay roysterers no doubt, for it was very late, almost eleven o'clock, and all decent folks were asleep hours before.

One of them, a fine brown-skinned strapping fellow, volunteered to find us a lodging, and led the way to a little house, where, after prolonged hammering, he obtained a reply in a female voice. A parley followed, and soon a light was struck and the door opened. I peeped in, but withdrew again with some misgivings, as the communal or family couch seemed to be spread on the floor, and a fluttering of garments indicated the toilette of the hostess. 'This does not look very promising,' thought I, but it turned out all right. Lighting our path with a little Roman lamp, on which the Yankee fixed a covetous eye, she led the way across the courtyard to a decent, clean little room containing both

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a bed and a couch. The Yankee took the couch; and after trying the bed a little gingerly and finding it dry and apparently clean, I decided to risk it, hopped in, and slept like a top. Not for some time, however, as my companion meantime strode up and down the room half dressed, declaiming on the beauties of Paolo Veronese. At last he too sought his couch, and all was peace.

Next morning our landlady called us at five, and, paying our bill of one peseta each, we set off to catch our train back to Toledo. The sun had just risen, and we were up on the watershed between the Tagus and the Guadiana. All round were low hills, purple in the morning light, one of them crowned by a fine old Moorish castle. At Algodor, our junction, we got some hot coffee, and at eight on the Sunday morning arrived at Toledo. It was a roundabout journey, but we were the richer by that wonderful nocturne of the little dreaming town.

CHAPTER II

THE CITY WALLS

THE visitor to an old fortress city like Toledo should begin by making a circuit of the walls. One then gets an impression of the city as a whole—as a compact community banded together to resist intrusion from without. Within the walls the civic life is dispersed through a myriad of narrow, winding streets—one loses grasp of the unity in the complexity and the multiplicity of interests; but, outside, the city draws its girdle of stone around it, and faces friend and foe with an unbroken front. And it is pre-eminently as a fortress that Toledo has played her part on the world's stage.

Perched on her steep hill-top, she has stood like a rock amid the waves while the centuries rolled by, and always the sea of war surged round her. Time after time the strife

T H E H E A R T O F S P A I N
has swept the city and laid it bare; but each successive Toledo, built amid the ruins of the old, has carried on the same warlike traditions. Toledo always has been Toledo.

Away on the dim margin of history we find her townsmen fighting desperately against Carthage, undismayed by the prowess of the greatest general of his day.

Then comes the struggle with Rome, and the Roman occupation, which in Spain as elsewhere has left its mark writ large for all the world to see. Toledo must have been a populous and important place in the times of the Romans, for though nothing remains now but a few crumbling ruins, these are on a scale that is vast even for them.

With the decay of Rome follows the ruder inundation of the Goths and their reign of barbaric magnificence. Of their rulers two only are remembered, the one for his deeds, the other for his misfortunes.

The story of each is romantic. Wamba,

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who ruled Toledo and therefore Spain—for Toledo was now the Gothic capital—from 680 to 687 A.D., did not succeed to the throne by right of birth, but on the death of Rescevinthus was elected king by the vote of the Gothic noblemen. It is said that the modest warrior at first declined the honour, when one indignant knight confronted him with drawn sword, threatening to slay him there and then if he persisted in his refusal. He made his triumphal entry into Toledo nineteen days after, and at once seized the reins of government firmly. Not only did he suppress insurrection at home (for Toledo was a turbulent one), but he successfully led his armies beyond the Pyrenees. The end of his reign was as strange and unexpected as its beginning. An attempt was made to poison him, which so nearly succeeded that the king lay unconscious, and, taken for dead, he was prepared for burial, and robed in the monk's hood and gown of

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renouncement. But once a monk, always a monk; and though he revived in time to escape premature burial, the king was forced to retire to the cloister, leaving the management of the kingdom in other and less able hands.

A strange history this for the strongest of all the Gothic kings. Without his own wish placed on a throne, and then in a few brief years as summarily removed from it. But in his short reign he set his mark on the city, and the great wall, built on the foundations of the old Roman structure, still remains to perpetuate his memory.

A record of a different nature had Roderick, the last of the Gothic kings. We hear of him first as a grandiose and magnificent prince, scattering riches with the most lavish hand.

He signalised his ascent to the throne by a great tournament, the like of which for splendour had never been seen. Thousands

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of knights came from all the world to take part, including 'the son of the King of England,' and each was the guest of the king, and presented by him with horse and armour, shield and lance. But however splendid in this mimic warfare, Roderick failed terribly when it came to the stern reality. His immense army was cut to pieces at Guadalete by the invading army of Moors. It is said indeed that there was treachery in the Spanish ranks, and that Roderick paid his debt by dying valiantly sword in hand; but in any case the Gothic rule was over in Spain for ever.

Under her Moorish rulers Toledo was no less unmanageable than before. And while the Moors carried the seat of their government to Cordova, Toledo always remembered that she had been the ancient capital of Spain. One governor after another was appointed. Sometimes the city accorded a nominal submission, sometimes it rose in

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open rebellion, but it was never really at peace, and in 1085, after a lapse of three hundred and fifty years, it managed to drive the Saracen from its gates. But in another way than by force of arms the Moor has laid his hand on the city, and stamped it with a peculiar beauty which the years have failed to efface.

Under Christian rule Toledo continued her chequered career, and she saw her last royal days under the martial Charles V.

With the moving of the Court to Madrid, her glories departed for ever. But even then she was not allowed to rest in peace. A hundred years ago the French armies again laid waste Toledo, pillaged the Cathedral, and destroyed many a priceless relic which time had spared.

Such is a brief *résumé* of the history of Toledo. And now the tale is ended. Toledo, the ancient royal city, 'the Heart of Spain,' as the old writer calls it, is to-day but a place

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of memories and dreams. The current of national life, sluggish enough in any case, does not cause even a ripple in this quiet backwater. Even should a miracle happen and the awakening of Spain, so much talked of by the café politicians, become an accomplished fact, there can be no awakening for Toledo. She can never be modernised, her life-story belongs to the past.

Her very people do not belong to her now. They merely occupy the empty shell. The real inhabitants of Toledo are a shadowy host; they whose minds conceived those works of mouldering beauty, and whose hands raised those mighty, crumbling walls.

I see them pass in procession. The Roman centurion, a square, heavy figure with clear eyes and steady, unfaltering tread; the long-haired Goth in his gorgeously silken robes and golden chains; and the swarthy Moor, grave and silent, clothed in flowing white, passing from the council-chamber to the cool and

BRIDGE OF ALCÁNTARA

*From a sketch in oils
by the Author*



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fairy-like apartments of his dark-eyed houris. Then the trim gallant of a later day, scented and curled and daintily ruffled, swaggering along, a sword of best Toledo make by his side; and behind him another darker figure, the pale, sinister priest with crucifix in hand.

These are the real inhabitants of Toledo. I hear their footfalls in the narrow streets, their voices echo amid the ruined palaces and empty halls.

The starting-point of a walk round the walls of Toledo is naturally the Bridge of Alcántara, the main entrance to the city. Coming from the little railway station, I have crossed it many times; sometimes on foot, climbing the path to the Zocodover; sometimes driven by a jangling team of mules, that, urged by whip and voice, take the steep streets at a gallop; sometimes by day, with the city above flaming a sunburnt yellow against the blue; sometimes by night,

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with its studded lights and dark outline silent against the stars; but never has the entry been without a strange and romantic charm. You are entering a mediæval city. You feel like William Morris in 'A Dream of John Ball,' when he awakes to find himself in England of the fourteenth century.

That mighty bridge, with the portecullis gateway, and the great square tower on the furtherside, belongs to other days than ours; and as one looks at it, so strong, so serviceable, so enduring, it seems as if here at least those other days must linger still.

For there is nothing ruinous about the Bridge of Alcántara. Though it still carries the remains of Roman work in its piers, and of Gothic work on its façade, it bears only the dignity, nothing of the weakness of age. The great arch spans the stream in one magnificent leap, and it seems as if, like the tawny river underneath, the stream of time too flowed by, and left the old bridge untouched.

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At one time the bridge was guarded by two great square towers, but the first of these has disappeared, and its place is supplied by a sixteenth-century gateway. Through this—the portcullis still hanging in the doorway—you pass on to the stone-flagged bridge. It is so narrow, you have to squeeze to the side if a donkey passes with its huge panniers; but over the piers it widens out into a circular space. All along it is guarded by a high granite parapet with the great ball ornaments so much in vogue in Spain. At the far side stands the huge tower which forms the Puerta de Alcántara, the first of the gates of Toledo. A hard nut to crack it must have been in the olden days, more easily seized by stratagem than force; but nothing more serious meets us now than a custom-house officer.

Before reaching the Bridge of Alcántara, the Tagus flows through a stretch of level plain. And like some people who carry their

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own sunshine with them, so in this dry and thirsty land the river brings fertility. A far off you can trace its course by the line of green trees on the yellow plain. On its banks are spread rich fields and gardens, and groves full of pleasant shade. For the turgid water is scooped up by the innumerable buckets of hundreds of primitive water-wheels, each driven by some patient mule or donkey, and spread in tiny rivulets over the land.

Just before the bridge the river enters a narrow gorge between two rocky hills. On the left bank the ruined castle of San Servando, built to command the entrance; on the right, Toledo. Round the city the river sweeps in one mighty horse-shoe bend, all the way between steep and precipitous banks, passing into the open plain again beyond the Bridge of San Martin. To the city it is a natural barrier of the strongest kind, and on the one exposed side where

THE CITY WALLS

Toledo faces the open plain, the wit of man has supplied the deficiency.

From the Bridge of Alcántara to the Bridge of San Martin runs Wamba's great wall, still in an almost perfect state of preservation.

Also starting from the same point is the newer wall, which takes a sweep into the plain and includes the suburb which formerly lay outside the walls, joining the older wall at the Puerta de Visagra. The new wall, however, is comparatively uninteresting. Its only gateway is paltry and mean, an ugly square doorway. The gates of the old wall, however, are among the chief glories of Toledo, and first and most magnificent of all is the famous Puerta del Sol.

I shall never forget my first sight of this great monument. The road runs past it on a lower level, and you do not notice it as you approach. Then turning round you see it suddenly; it bursts upon you all at once—at

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the top of the slope a grand mass of rich orange and umber stone towering up against the deep blue of the sky. But what seizes the eye of the stranger at once is the actual portal, with its fine Moorish arches. The outer pointed like the Gothic, but curving inward at the base with an infinitely graceful sweep; the inner of the well-known horse-shoe form. A wave of satisfaction and delight passed through me. 'Ah,' thought I, 'this is the real thing; this is what I have come to Spain to see.'

The gateway is flanked by two round towers with battlemented top, and the façade is enriched with a handsome brick frieze of intertwining arches.

It is indeed a gateway worthy of the city; impressive in its strength and solidity, but so exquisitely proportioned as to give no feeling of heaviness, and revealing ever fresh beauties on a closer study.

Were any one to ask me, 'What is the

THE CITY WALLS

most typical monument of Toledo?' I should unhesitatingly answer, 'The Puerta del Sol.'

For many visits I was content to gaze on it from below; but one day I crossed the little garden behind the church of Cristo de la Luz, and entered the winding stair that leads to the top.

It is a roomy place, fit to hold a garrison of a hundred men; a large chamber above the doorway, with great gaps in the floor through which boiling lead, or anything else for that matter, could be hurled on the heads of the attacking party. The roof, however, is where the bulk of the garrison would be placed. Many an ancient sentinel must have paced the top of that tower and scanned the plain with an eager and searching scrutiny. Now it is a pleasant place for the artist or the poet to sit and dream, to abandon himself to the spell of the place and its atmosphere of antique war. Not the crack of the rifle or the thunder of artillery startle the

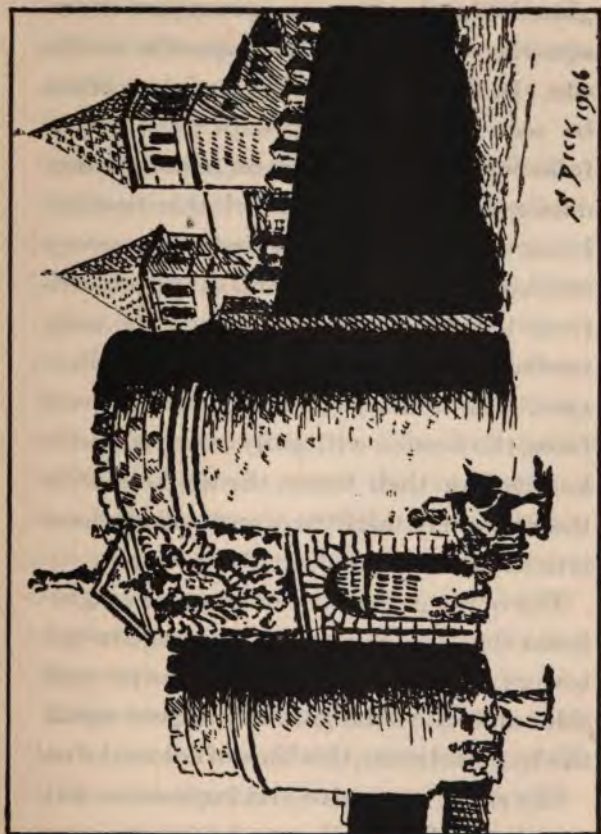
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ears of reverie, but the whiz of the arrow, the twang of the cross-bow. The Puerta del Sol must have been the centre of many a desperate fight, the slope below must have often flowed with blood, but the scene is quiet and peaceful enough now.

The little life of Toledo no longer passes under the Puerta del Sol. Grass grows beneath its arches, but time only mellows its beauty.

From the Puerta the road runs down through the suburb enclosed by the newer wall past the picturesque Mudejar church of Santiago to the Nueva Puerta de Visagra, now the main gate of the city through which the chief traffic passes.

Built in the time of Charles V., it is a most pretentious structure, a double gate with a courtyard between the two. The inner portal is surmounted by the Imperial arms, and is flanked by two curious square towers, whose high-peaked roofs are covered with



PUERTA DE VISAGRA NUEVA

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

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glazed tiles, in alternate green and white squares, which flash and sparkle in the sun. In the spacious courtyard may often be seen picturesque groups of country folks with their produce on heavily laden donkeys, awaiting the inevitable custom-house examination. It seems to savour very much of the Middle Ages, this tax on imports from the country to the town; the only modern part is the uniform of the policeman. The country folks with their brown faces, the women with gaily coloured handkerchiefs on their heads, the donkeys with their panniers, might be of any period; there is nothing of the modern about them.

The outer gateway is even more magnificent than the inner one. Two huge round towers, heavy and squat, stand one on each side; and above the gateway appear again the Imperial arms, this time of colossal size.

The effect is massive and impressive, but somehow, after the Puerta del Sol, it seems

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almost vulgar. It has a tinge of the theatrical, it seeks to be imposing. The other, proudly reticent, makes no appeal for notice. That comes without asking.

Only about a hundred yards away is the old Puertade Visagra, much less pretentious but more interesting, and to my mind much finer than the new. It is a great square tower, simple and massive, flanked by a smaller jutting-out defensive tower. It is Moorish work of the twelfth century, earlier and more severe than that of the Puerta del Sol. The façade, however, the great round arch in the centre, the smaller pointed one at each side, is a charming piece of work, plain and unornamented, but satisfying by its exquisite proportions. Above the gateway runs a row of narrow loophole windows.

It has long since ceased to be used. Inside the wall the houses press closely all round it. Outside, the road which runs round the walls is some seven or eight feet above the

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old level, so that the fine old gateway is half buried. From the road you look down at it over the iron railing of a protecting wall which has been built a few yards from it.

I endeavoured to find my way to the inner entrance, and after some wanderings in crooked streets among tumble-down houses, I managed to get admittance to a courtyard just behind the gate. It was ruinous and neglected, and the chamber under its arches was occupied as a hen-roost. Why hens should give such an air of squalid degradation I do not know, but so it is. Had it been a stable, or even a pig-sty, it would not have been so bad—but hens! One seemed here to touch the lowest depths.

The last of the chief gates, the Puerta del Cambron, is the least interesting of all. A red brick building with four square towers, each with the usual peaked roof. Elsewhere it might command a good deal of attention, but in Toledo we pass it by almost with con-



PUERTA DEL CAMBRON

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

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tempt. At the entrance stands an ancient pillory.

Here outside the walls is held the Feria, the annual horse-fair of Toledo. A picturesque scene it is. I saw comparatively few horses, but hundreds of mules and donkeys; and, not less interesting, the country folks and the horse-dealers from all the districts round. This is the time and place to see the national costume: the quaint, Japanese-looking black hat, the black knee-breeches and leather gaiters of the men, and the gay-coloured shawls and handkerchiefs of the women. Some of the younger men too were great dandies, with coloured scarfs, and waistcoats with a band of embroidery at the back; and you came on pleasant little family groups picnicking under the tilt of a waggon.

Of the animals, the donkeys pleased me most. Beautiful little creatures, and you could buy one for a couple of pounds.

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I have acquired quite a respect and liking for the humble ass since I came to Spain ; docile, patient, and hard working, you see him tripping nimbly along under a huge load with, as like as not, a hulking Spaniard on top as a make-weight. And here the donkey does not bear the reputation for stupidity which he has at home. When, as is often the case, you see a donkey and a mule harnessed to the same cart, little Neddy is placed first, on account of his superior intelligence ! And a wise and meditative little philosopher he looks.

From the road you command a striking view of the wide sweep of plain to the north, bounded by low hills, with here and there a peep of the dim blue of the Gaudarama, at least sixty miles away.

Below lie the ruins of the Circo Romano, the great Roman amphitheatre. Little now remains of the building : only sufficient to enable us to trace its plan and judge of its

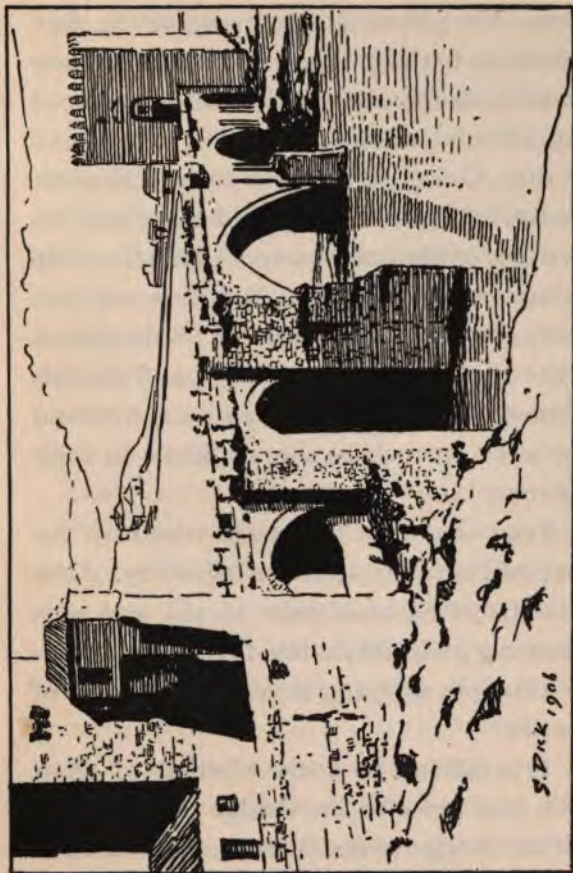
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enormousextent. Even the great bull-rings of Spain are dwarfed by the comparison.

A little further to the west lies the church of Cristo de la Vega, with its miraculous crucifix about which so many different legends are told. A peaceful little picture, the little church with its circular apse standing in a garden of dark green cypresses.

From the Puerta del Cambron the road runs sharply round the hill, past the church of San Juan de Los Reyes, and down to the Bridge of San Martin. Overhanging the river are the ruins of what were once the fortifications of the palace of the Gothic kings; and down by the water's edge, just where the gorge begins to widen out, the little square tower called the 'Baños de la Cava.' Archæologists tell us that the tower once formed part of an ancient bridge, but popular legend supplies another and more romantic story.

It is said that Roderick, the ill-fated king,



BRIDGE OF SAN MARTIN

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

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from his palace window espied the fair Florinda bathing there, and in the passion thus kindled in the royal breast was the root of all his misfortunes. For Florinda's father, Count Julian, was one of the most powerful of the Gothic noblemen, and the wrongs of his daughter turned him into the king's bitterest enemy. Nay, the story goes so far as to say that it was by his invitation that the Moors entered Spain, and that his desertion of the royal colours at the critical moment turned the tide of battle in their favour.

True or not, in this particular case the legend has many a parallel in history. John the Baptist's head falls at the nod of a dancing girl, and an idle love affair brings a kingdom toppling down like a house of cards.

It is difficult to know whether to grant the first place to the Bridge of Alcántara or the Bridge of San Martin. If either had

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been alone, if the city had possessed but the one, we should have called it unrivalled; but which of the two bears the palm? Better to leave the question unanswered, and take each on its own merits.

The river here is wider, and the Bridge of San Martin consists of no fewer than five arches. But the middle arch is the great beauty of the bridge, the others are merely subsidiary. In one magnificent leap it spans the main current, which flows nearly a hundred feet below.

There is always to me something inspiring and invigorating about the arch of a mighty bridge. The bold leap into the air fascinates me. It is the most living line in architecture. As a rule architecture is a static art—the art of things at rest. One stone placed upon another; the impression of solidity and permanence—this is at once its strength, and, in a sense, its weakness. But this daring spring into space, this seeming

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defiance of the laws of gravity, met and counteracted by an equally daring leap from the other side, the two arms meeting in mid air, while down below moves a seething, raging flood—there is a thrill of excitement about it which rouses me to enthusiasm.

The bridge dates from early in the thirteenth century, but nearly two hundred years later it underwent extensive repairs, almost amounting to rebuilding. It is said that the architect entrusted with the work found to his horror, when it was approaching completion, that a serious miscalculation as to its strength had been made. Were the scaffolding to be removed, the whole structure must inevitably collapse. From the horns of this dilemma he was rescued by the quick wit of his wife, who secretly set fire to the scaffolding, thus allowing the bridge to fall with fair excuse; and on the second rebuilding her husband took care

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to make no mistake. To-day the bridge looks strong enough to stand another five hundred years.

The great square tower still stands at each end, although that on the near side has been so cut down that the actual gateway seems now to pass through an excrescence jutting out from its side.

That on the further bank is more complete, with a handsome portal of pointed Moorish arch at the entrance, and rounded arch—pierced for the portcullis—within. It too has been cut down, only a fragment of the beautiful pointed arch on the further side remaining, some ten or twelve feet of the tower having been cut away. But even in its mutilated state this portal is second only in picturesqueness and beauty to the Puerta del Sol.

It is a striking picture which is seen from the far side of the river looking across the bridge towards the city. The bold arches

BRIDGE OF SAN MARTIN

*From a water-colour
by the Author*



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of the bridge, the town rising above, the mass of San Juan de Los Reyes crowning the summit of the hill—and all steeped in floods of mellow sunlight. Down the stream the Baños de la Cava and the old palace walls are reflected in the still water, and away below the river meanders through green trees and fertile meadows.

From the Bridge of San Martin to the Bridge of Alcántara a rugged path runs along the steep hillside facing the town. It is an interesting walk; but in the heat of summer it is killing work, for there is almost no shade to be had. One is repaid, however, by some fine panoramic views of the town. There too are the cigarros, the old country houses of the Toledans, surrounded with orchards that are still famous for their apricots. The rocky hills too are covered with an herb like thyme, which fills the air with fragrance as you tread on it.

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Away below in the gulf between you and the city flows the Tagus ; a square, heavy ferry-boat, more like a box than a boat, plies slowly too and fro. Every here and there is a dam and mills, or the ruins of mills. Old Moorish mills, they tell you.

What a place Toledo must have been in the time of the Moors !

CHAPTER III

THE MOORS IN TOLEDO

To come to Spain and see everywhere around the legacies of the Moors; to note how, as they passed by, the barren spots grew fertile, and everything they touched turned to beauty; to note also the decay that set in as their influence slowly died away—this is to revise one's impressions of mediæval history.

When as a boy I read about the pilgrimage of that gallant knight, Sir James Douglas, with the heart of the Bruce, and his glorious death, fighting against the Moors in Spain, the picture before my mind's eye was that of a horde of swarthy barbarians with white turbans and curved scimitars,—not far out, perhaps, as an impression, but very much less than the whole truth.

For the Saracen, against whom the Chris-

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tian waged his holy wars, was no barbarian, but in the enjoyment of a civilisation in many cases far in advance of that of his adversaries. The war of East and West was then no one-sided affair, but a bitter and protracted struggle between forces equally matched.

It was sword against scimitar, lance against spear, the heavy mail-clad knight against the light horseman of the desert. Nay, if anything the advantage lay with the Saracen—the sun and the burning wastes of sand were his allies; for in such wars the local gods always fight against the stranger.

But the Saracen in those days could do more than hold his own. Like a rising tide his hosts surged along the northern coasts of Africa, till at length, in the eighth century, they crossed the narrow straits of Gibraltar. Islam hammered at the gates of Christendom.

The result was one of the most complete

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and remarkable conquests of history. In 711 the invading army of Moors, numbering only some 12,000 men, met the huge army of Rodrigo, the Gothic king, at Guadalete. They say the struggle lasted nearly a week; but the Goths were weakened with luxury and sloth, their ranks were torn by jealousies and dissensions. The result was their total defeat, almost their annihilation.

After that events moved quickly. In a few days Tarik, the Moorish general, advanced on Toledo. At that time, as for many years afterwards, much of the wealth of the city was gathered in the hands of the Jews. The Gothic noblemen had fled on the approach of the enemy, and the Jews, who had suffered much from the rapacity of their former rulers, thinking that the change had every chance of being for the better, threw open the city gates and welcomed the Moorish conqueror with open arms.

Firmly fixed in Toledo, Tarik sent out de-

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tachments against city after city. Cordova, Archidme, Elvira, one after another, fell into his hands, and soon the conquest of Spain was complete. And this dominion, seemingly so easily accomplished, was to last for no less than seven centuries; for it was not until 1492, by the conquest of Granada, that the Saracen was finally driven back to the shores of Africa. It is said that many Moorish families still hold the keys of their palaces in Granada; and when a friend of mine showed to an old Moor in Tangiers photos of Cordova and the Alhambra, he looked long and earnestly. Then he said, 'We shall return there some day.'

But in a far subtler way than by the force of arms the Moors set their mark on Spain. They brought civilisation to a barbarous country. Under their enlightened rule the soil, cunningly irrigated, brought forth abundantly, and cities grew prosperous and wealthy. And those cities—Cordova, Seville,

THE MOORS IN TOLEDO

Granada, Toledo—are all Moorish towns. The narrow streets, the high, windowless walls, built to shut out the glaring sunshine, the pleasant patios, cool and shady, with their fountains and green plants,—there is something Oriental about it all.

And in Spain the Moorish civilisation bloomed like a flower. Here its arts reached their highest point. The Alhambra, the Mosque at Cordova, the Alcázar at Seville, these, even in their mutilated condition, are still the wonder and admiration of the world; and besides such well-known examples are many more, less famous, but hardly less beautiful.

And even after the Moors had departed, their influence remained. Indeed for a time the work was still carried on largely by Moorish workmen. And we must remember that the going of the Moors was a very different matter from their coming. They were driven from Spain inch by inch, and

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in Granada maintained their foothold for
hundreds of years after they had lost the
rest of the peninsula. So that the actual
Moorish influences were all the time in the
midst of Spain.

And thus arose that most beautiful and
interesting development, the Mudejar style
of architecture, a curious blending of Chris-
tian and Saracenic art, by far the most char-
acteristic note of Spanish architecture, and
quite unique, being confined to Spain alone.

But, as the freshness of the impulse died
away, degradation crept in. In the later
Spanish styles of architecture we have more
and more decoration but less and less good
taste, and I think the deepest depths of all
are touched by the notorious *Trasparente*
of Toledo Cathedral, a veritable nightmare
in coloured marble.

As rulers the Moors appear to have been
mild and humane. Indeed their rule in
Spain seems to have had many of the feat-

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ures of British rule in India. It was rather an armed occupation than a colonisation, and the people were, under their government, if anything better off than under the princes of their own blood.

Freedom of creed was granted. The Christians were even allowed to administer their own laws, though the ruling of the Christian judge might be overturned on appeal to the Moorish tribunal.

In Toledo the Moorish rule was even milder than elsewhere. But, stormy and irrepressible as ever, the city rose against one governor after another. Toledo wished to rule, not to be ruled; and finally, in 1085, after three hundred and fifty years of Moorish dominion, the city was once more in the hands of the Christians.

But the Moors have stamped their characteristics on Toledo in a way that cannot be effaced. Philip II. might destroy their inscriptions on the bridges and gates, but

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all signs of their presence could only be removed by razing the city to the ground.

Of work actually executed during the Moorish occupation there remains little, but of the various periods of the Mudejar style examples are many. Indeed there is hardly an important building in Toledo but bears some traces of Moorish influence.

It is strange that the oldest of the Moorish buildings in Toledo, a little Mohammedan mosque, should now masquerade as a Christian church—Cristo de la Luz—and be linked with a Christian legend.

It is said that even before the Moorish occupation the church was in existence (legend takes no account of styles of architecture), and when the town was entered by the invaders, the sacred crucifix, standing in a niche with a lamp burning before it, was walled up to protect it from their sacrilegious hands. The three hundred and fifty years of Moorish rule went by, and

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when Alphonso VI. entered the town with the Cid on 25th May 1085, the famous warrior's horse suddenly stopped and knelt down. An examination was made, the wall pulled down, and the image discovered with the lamp still burning before it, just as it was three hundred and fifty years before.

The building is in two parts, a nave and an apse, the first forming what was originally the mezquita of Bib-al-Mardóm, the second being an addition of a much later date.

The mezquita is quite a tiny place, only some twenty feet square. There are only four pillars, from which spring the round, horse-shoe arches, running up the nave and across it at right angles; yet it seems quite a spacious church, a grove of pillars and aisles—in fact a miniature Cordova.

The work is of even an earlier date than the great mosque of Cordova, being of the

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ninth and tenth centuries, simple and massive, relying more on justness of proportion than on ornament for its effect.

It is interesting to trace the same evolution in the architecture of the Moor as in our northern Gothic style. In its earlier stages it is marked rather by strength and massiveness than by elegance, but as time goes on it becomes lighter and more graceful. The change is somewhat akin to that from the Norman to the Early English style. Then comes the employment of ornament in richer and richer forms, more and more lavishly applied—a parallel to the history of the Decorated phase in England.

The mezquita of Bib-al-Mardóm belongs to the first simple style. The capitals of the four pillars from which the arches spring are not Moorish but Visigothic. As in Cordova and elsewhere, the Moors have used in the building the remains of some former edifice. Above the square formed by the



MEZQUITA OF BIB-AL-MARDÔM (NOW NAVE OF
CRISTO DE LA LUZ)



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pillars rises the little central dome, surrounded by eight other subsidiary domes, the whole forming a roof of great richness and beauty.

The brickwork of the exterior is also full of interest. On one side runs a fine frieze of round arches interlacing, and above is an inscription in Arabic characters, each character being formed of a specially shaped brick. Translated the inscription reads:—

‘In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Piteous, was reconstructed this mezquita, restored in order to render the work more beautiful, and terminated with the help of Allah, under the direction of Musa-Ibn-Aly, the architect, and of Saâda. Completed in the year 370 of the Hegira’ (980 A.D.).

If the restoration, then, took place in the tenth century, it is probable that the bulk of the building is considerably older.

The brickwork of the older portion contrasts strikingly with that of the apse, which

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is of Mudejar style and some four hundred years later. The new has gained in richness and interest, but has lost a certain elegance and distinction of the older part.

The interior of the apse is uninteresting architecturally, but on the walls are several curious and very primitive paintings of Byzantine style which are said to be the oldest in Spain. Unless, however, speedy measures are taken to preserve them, they will soon disappear, as the soft plaster is flaking away bit by bit.

Beyond a few fragmentary remains the mezquita of Bib-al-Mardóm is the only surviving building of the actual period of the Moorish occupation. But the later examples, more correctly not Moorish, but Mudejar in style, are numerous.

First of all we have the grand gateway of Visagra Antigua, said to have been built by Moorish workmen in the twelfth century. To me this gate is only second to the Puerta

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del Sol. It is one of those simple, unobtrusive
pieces of work whose beauty grows on one.
It is like a trusty friend, and becomes ever
dearer as it grows more familiar. With
nothing flashy, nothing that is loud or self-
assertive, but full of quiet dignity, what a
contrast it is to the noisy and fussy trivi-
alities of modern times.

Of the thirteenth century are many fine
examples, the most important and the fin-
est of all being the little synagogue of Santa
Maria la Blanca.

Near the Bridge of San Martin lies what
was once the Ghetto of Toledo. In the olden
times most of the wealth of the city was
collected here; though, with characteristic
caution, the wealthy Jew, like Isaac of York,
was careful to make the exterior of his
house as poor-looking and mean as possible,
to avoid arousing the cupidity of his rulers.
Inside was lavished all that riches could
command. The Ghetto is now almost swept

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away. All that is left is a medley of mean streets. There may be treasures still hidden within, but the task of exploration is hardly a tempting one.

From the wreck two synagogues have escaped, owing to what we must now consider as a happy accident, though doubtless considered by their unhappy owners as the deepest sacrilege. At the time of the expulsion of the Jews they were converted into Christian churches.

Santa Maria la Blanca is shut off from the road by a high wall. You knock at the gate and are admitted by a pretty girl, with sleeves rolled up, evidently busy with the family wash. You pass into the cool green garden, the maiden returns to her wash-tubs, and you walk up the stone-flagged path to the open door of the synagogue (it is no longer used as a church), and, unmolested by any ignorant and voluble guide, can absorb the atmosphere of the place at your leisure.



SANTA MARIA LA BLANCA

From a photograph



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At the first general view of the interior, you see that the severity of the Cordova style has given place to something lighter and more ornate. You still have the circular arch, curving inward at the base, but the rich plaster-work on the walls is as new as it is charming.

The capitals of the pillars, also in plaster, are moulded in rich and fantastic fashion with striking effect, but the chief decoration is above the arches on the walls of the nave and aisles. Especially fascinating are the circular pieces of ornament surrounded by scroll-work, in the triangular spaces between each pair of arches. No two of these are alike in detail, but each one is more beautiful than another.

The basis of these intricate designs is geometric, and here we have the explanation why even the most elaborate of Arabic decoration does not fatigue the eye. In a free design one seeks to follow the movement

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of the lines, and if the pattern is at all involved or obscure, the eye tires, the result being a feeling of dissatisfaction and irritation. But in the geometric design the main lines run inevitably, they cannot vary, the eye grasps them without effort, and finds in them something steadying and restful; the detail, no matter how rich, fits in like so much embroidery.

And so it is in this case. The windows of the church are few and high up, but amply sufficient in the brilliant light of Spain. The floor is laid with a dull red tile, relieved with richer work in beautiful azulejos. A broad band of similar azulejos runs round the base of each pillar, giving a rich and elegant finish.

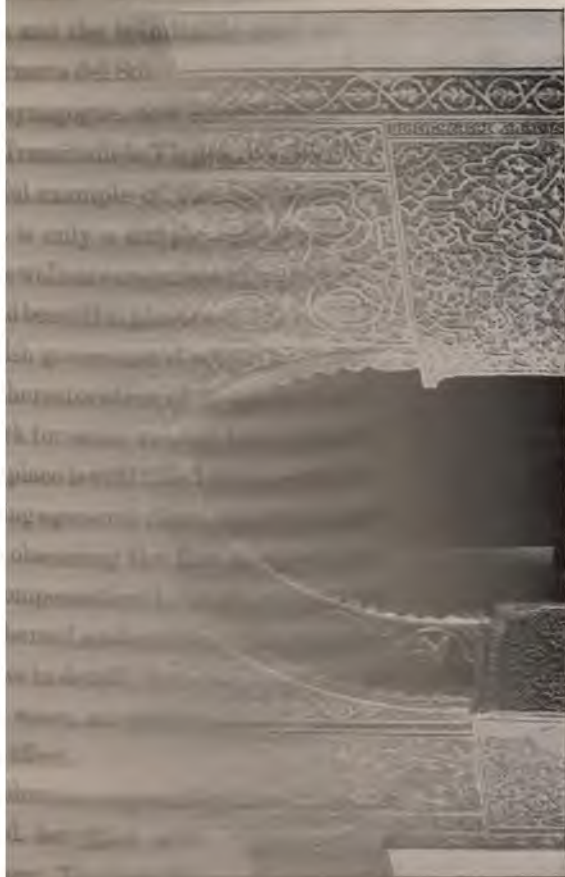
Of much the same date as Santa Maria la Blanca is the charming arcading of the triforium of the Cathedral choir, which lends an Eastern tinge to that Gothic building; and also of this century are the fine Puerta



EL TRANSITO—DETAIL OF ORNAMENT

From a photograph





CASA DE MESA—ARCH OF DOORWAY

From a photograph

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screen and fills the place with a soft and chastened brightness.

In the old days, when Santa Maria la Blanca and El Transito stood in the midst of a rich and prosperous Ghetto, their beauties must have been rivalled by those of many a private house. The finest example of this nature, however, now remaining—the Casa de la Mesa—is in quite a different part of the town. All that is left of it is one room, but that is in an almost perfect condition.

There we have as usual the simple rectangular shape, a balcony running across one end of the room, and the wall-space glorified by wonderful plaster-work. The ornamentation is especially concentrated round the rich arch of the doorway, a thing of unforgettable beauty. Below runs a dado of finely coloured azulejos, which add to the richness of the effect. Above the balcony is a fine Agimez window set in a framing of rich plaster-work.



CASA DE MESA—ARCH OF DOORWAY

From a photograph



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Tometherealwaysseemsto besomething so fairy like in this Eastern luxuriance—it comes with a never-failing freshness and surprise, and I never can feel it to be the work of human hands. It breathes the very spirit of the Arabian Nights—of miraculous palaces raised between the twilight and the dawning.

‘ Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
Of desolate seas, in fairy lands forlorn.’

Were such a building to find itself in northernclimes,itcouldonlyhavebeenbuilt by the dainty hands of the little people. Suchpalacesasthesemaywell haveawaited Bonny Kilmeny when charmed away to the underworld by the elfin band whose light feet marked the green rings on the meadow lands, and whose forms flit across the moon-lit glades of the silent woods.

In olden Spain one was sometimes very near to fairyland.

Another private house, the Taller del

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Moro, rivals the Casa de Mesa in the beauty of its decoration, but it is now a degraded ruin.

What was once the patio is now a cattle-yard, the fine banqueting hall with a smaller opening-off room at each end is now a coach-house. The main doorway and the arches into the smaller rooms are rich beyond description, and the walls too are covered with marvellous work. But this priceless relic, an ideal place for a small museum, is utterly neglected, and in a few years will probably have disappeared.

It is strange that this house, beautiful even in decay, should have attached to it one of Toledo's grimmest legends. Tradition places here the scene of the horrible 'Noche Toledano,' when the Moorish governor invited four hundred of the nobles and citizens of Toledo to a grand banquet. The guests were admitted one by one, and as each entered the dark courtyard, he was stealthily



DOORWAY OF PALACE OF PEDRO THE CRUEL

From a photograph



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stabbed, and his body thrown into the ditch. In the morning four hundred heads were exposed on the palace wall.

It always appears to me that such a legend could more suitably have attached to the palace of Pedro the Cruel, now the convent of Santa Isobel. The high wall of the courtyard, with its rich gate, the huge building with its windowless walls and air of grim secrecy, the whole place seems the natural home for such tragic tales. But doubtless its own records would reveal enough were they but known.

A striking feature about Toledo is the number of fine Mudejar church towers, which give it quite a distinctive character. One of the finest of these is that of San Roman; that of Santo Tomé is almost equally beautiful, and there are many others too numerous to mention.

Of complete churches in the Mudejar style the best example is perhaps that of Santiago,

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down near the Puerta Visagra, but all its beauties are seen from the outside. Inside a coating of plaster effectually hides the rich decoration with the exception of a beautiful little pulpit, which has only been spared because from it preached the fanatical St Vicente Ferrer in his crusade against the Jews.

CHAPTER IV

THE STREETS

ON leaving the hotel in the morning, probably the first thing one does is to stroll down to the Zocodover, the ancient market-place of the town. Everything begins at the Zocodover. On your arrival the bus sets you down there, the hotels cluster around it, it possesses the two chief cafés; in fact it is the centre of the sleepy life of the town.

Even if you had nothing to do you would go there for that very reason; but you have an errand even so early in the morning, for as a rule they do not brush your boots in Spanish hotels, and there is a little boot-brushing shop in the corner where you can sit at ease while undergoing treatment—it is really quite a refreshing massage—and look round on the scene.

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The Zocodover is a triangular open space, one side at this hour hot in the morning sun, the other two with shady arcades. The houses are a picturesque jumble of ancient and modern, with here and there a little square tower, with windows like an old-fashioned dove-cote. Below, the townspeople are taking their Sunday morning stroll. Young officers abound, for Toledo is the training school for officers of the infantry, and you see them everywhere. Smart, well-groomed young fellows, but not particularly soldierly. At home we wear our uniforms with a difference; a man in uniform is a man on parade, and holds himself as such. But in Spain they are much more free and easy. Even the officers wear their uniforms like a suit of tennis flannels.

A few mantillas are to be seen too, and out by the fountain a group of girls filling their earthenware jars. There is a larger group laughing and chatting in the shade,



LITTLE WATER-CARRIERS

From a photograph



THE STREETS

waiting their turn, their jars lying on the ground in order of precedence.

This is one of the most charming sights of Toledo. Wherever you go, at all hours of the day, you meet some bonnie lass coming back from the fountain, the big jar poised on her hip, with one brown arm flung round it. Fresh, round, merry faces have the girls of Toledo, and they do their hair in a big round mop adorned with various combs. They dress gaily too. Bright red or blue prints, a flaming handkerchief round the throat, or in winter time a rich shawl, so that even the shadowed streets are full of colour.

A few stalls stand in the sunlight; one with crimson awnings throwing a ruddy glow on the saleswoman below, a brown, gipsy-looking matron with a saffron-yellow handkerchief over her black locks.

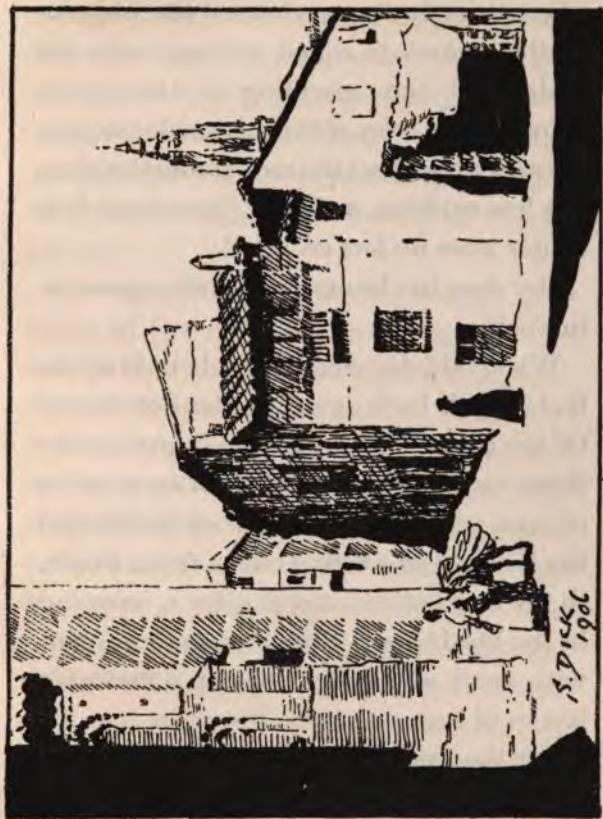
But, animated though the scene is, it reflects but dimly the bustle that must have

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filled the square in the heyday of Toledo's prosperity. The Tuesday markets of the Zocodover then were famous. The special privilege of a free market on these days had been granted to the town by Alphonso VI., and buyers and sellers flocked from all the country round. Nowhere else was produce and merchandise so good and so cheap. And Toledo at that time was a great commercial city. Her silks were almost as well known as the renowned Toledo blades, and many a cargo was shipped to the newly discovered Indies.

And the Zocodover knew sights gayer than these, and others too, more grim.

When the bull-fights were conducted in rather a more free and easy manner than in modern Spain, the Zocodover, like the Plaza Mayor in Madrid, formed the arena, and all the beauty and fashion of Toledo thronged its balconies.

And when a graver and more terrible



A QUIET STREET

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

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play was on the stage, when the black smoke of the *auto-de-fé* rolled sullenly over the plain, and the crackling of the flames drowned the cries of the miserable victims, we may guess that the mob found the piece not less exciting, and that these same balconies were no less crowded.

But time has brought some changes even in Spain.

When mid-day comes round one is apt to find oneself back again in the Zocodover. Of the two cafés I prefer the Imperial: the Suizo seems to have been built on a series of open gratings over the town drains, and the first has an awning out in front which, to the energetic stranger after a morning in the blazing sun, cumbered as like as not with easel and canvas, forms a veritable haven of rest.

For the summer sun of Spain, especially the August sun, is a new experience for the Englishman. You find yourself creeping

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along by the walls to keep in the narrow belt of shade, and when you reach an open patch, you carefully look to see if you cannot dodge it somehow. If there is no way round, you slip across as expeditiously as if you were under fire, which indeed in a sense you are.

One morning, right in the hottest fortnight of the year, I found a picturesque corner for a sketch, and looked round for the convenient patch of shade. But alas! it was not to be seen. After weighing the pros and cons—it was a very attractive little subject, but the street glowed like a Dutch oven—I stuck my stool right in the sun and sat down. And as I worked I grilled. First I put my handkerchief under my hat and grilled a little longer. Then I took off my coat, and still grilled. There was no way out of it; by the time that sketch was done, I too was done—to a turn.

So I found out that you do not require to

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go 'somewhere east of Suez' to 'raise a thirst.' It can be done perfectly well in Spain. The difficulty is the quenching, not the raising. The teetotal drinks, fruit extracts, lemon, orange, and so on, that should be just the thing—cool and acid—are all made too sweet. A mixture of beer and iced lemonade is better, and wine well diluted with water is fairly good, but vermouth seems to suit the climate best. Besides, it is recommended in Murray's Guide; and what more can I say than that?

And under the awning in front of the Imperial, with the temperature over a hundred in the shade and anything you like in the sun, vermouth and soda tastes better than anywhere else in the world, and is served by the smartest waiter in Spain.

Thus a pleasant half-hour passes before your mid-day meal.

Just opposite is the 'Arco de la Sangre,' a Moorish gateway through which a flight

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of stairs runs down to a steep street leading to the Bridge of Alcántara. This street was formerly the main entrance to Toledo, and the lower part formed the 'Street of Arms,' where the world-famed Toledo blades were made and sold.

The name, 'Arco de la Sangre,' 'The Arch of the Blood,' has a sinister sound, but the place is not associated with deeds of violence, as one might suppose. In the old days, when the Zocodover markets were famous, they were so important to the city that special arrangements were made for the convenience of sellers and buyers.

Not only was a special magistrate in attendance to settle all disputes, but there was also a little chapel above the arch—the chapel of the Precious Blood. Here the busy trader whose time was too valuable to permit him to go so far as the Cathedral or even the nearest church to hear mass, could at once save precious time and avoid im-

ARCO DE LA SANGRE, LOOKING UP TO THE ZOCODOVER

*From a water-colour
by the Author*



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perilling his soul, incidently also replenishing the coffers of the church. For the priests were good men of business then as now.

Up in the Zocodover you look through the bow of the arch. Away in the distance is a wide stretch of yellow plain, fading into purple hills, and topped by a dim sky of pale, shimmering blue; for the deep, fathomless blue belongs only to the sky overhead. Below us is the steep, narrow street, and just through the archway the 'Posada de la Sangre,' where Cervantes lived and wrote three hundred years ago.

The Posada is a delightful-looking place. You enter a wide doorway and find yourself in a little square courtyard. The second storey projects, supported on stout pillars, and forming an open gallery above. Below are big waggons and a prosaic-looking bus that runs to a neighbouring town. A surly man sits on a bench at the door and

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exacts toll if you wish to make a drawing, and a pretty woman draws water from a well in the corner: Beauty and the beast, seemingly not an uncommon relationship between man and wife here. It certainly looks far from clean—I should hardly like to sleep there—but for picturesqueness I envy Cervantes his inn at Toledo.

From the north-east corner of the Zocodover strikes off the Calle del Comercio, the chief business street of the town, with the handsomest shops, sellers of Toledo ware, of church embroidery, military tailors, and so on. The Toledo ware is the survival of the ancient gold damascening that so enriched the weapons and armour of earlier times. Now the art is chiefly applied to articles of jewellery; but the old Moorish designs are still followed, and for a comparatively small sum one can obtain a really beautiful piece of work. One has, however, to beware of the cheaper substitute 'made in Germany.'

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Here too you obtain one of the most striking views in picturesque Toledo. The winding street checkered with sun and shade, the bright shawls of the women flashing as they cross the sunlit patches, the irregular sky-line of dusky grey tiles, the windows with outside blinds and awnings to keep out the sun, and away at the end of the vista the Cathedral spire standing up against the blue.

You do not need a guide for the streets of Toledo. The things that you wish most to see have no names and are not in the guide-books. The fleeting effects of light and shade, the brilliant harmonies of colour, the quaint corners that belong to no style of architecture but the picturesque—these you will find for yourself and have the added delight of their discovery.

And indeed if you wished a guide you would find that the Toledans do not know their own city. One day, seeking permission

CALLE DEL COMERCIO

*From a water-colour
by the Author*





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to work in the Cathedral, I was directed to apply at the house of 'El Señor Presidente,' Calle de Correo. I got a small boy, who promptly took me to the 'Despacho de Correos'—the post office. After that I tried some six different people, carefully explaining to each that I did not wish to go to the post office, but to another quite different street. Each started gaily and confidently in a new direction, and I followed hopefully; but in ten minutes there I was, back at the post office, and the Spanish guide, grinning sheepishly, explained that he thought it was 'the same thing.' It took me all forenoon to find that address.

Toledo, however, certainly takes some knowing. It was some time before I could take a bee-line from the Bridge of San Martin to the Zocodover. But where ignorance is so interesting, why be wise?

In fact, to see the streets of Toledo to advantage, the best plan is to get lost. It is

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very simple. All you have to do is to pretend you are going somewhere, take the first street that seems to lead in the right direction, endeavour to counteract its windings by striking off to the right and left, and in three minutes there you are, absolutely lost. After that you saunter on contentedly and take what Providence sends.

Here you find a handsome doorway of the grandiose time of Charles V., situated in a narrow street where two can hardly pass; there you come across a fragment of rich Moorish plaster-work; and every now and then an open door gives you a glimpse of a cool, shady patio, with plants and flowers, and in the midst of it all a pretty family group.

Then you strike a little open square with its fountain and group of laughing girls, all wanting their portraits taken (it is not a bad plan to carry a camera); and at one side of it is sure to be a little church with



TOWER OF SANTO TOMÉ



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curious square brick tower of Mudejar style
—half Christian, half Arab.

I remember stumbling on one little chapel in this way while a service was going on. The chapel though small was quite sumptuous; a thick carpet covered the floor, the altar was ablaze with candles, and four priests, one in rich vestments of black and gold, assisted by two juvenile candlebearers, conducted the service. It was very impressive. One of the priests had a magnificent voice, and the organ was used not to lead, but merely to back up the voices. In its way the vocal music was very fine indeed.

But I was very much struck by the look of these priests. Fat, coarse-looking fellows, in their long robes they looked like horrible ungainly women. And it seemed to me that those were the descendants of the old Inquisitors, professing to-day the same creed, and filled with the same ideas. The steadfast opponents of everything included in

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the word progress, the stiflers of education, standing always not for advance but for reaction, they are to-day the curse of Spain. As they swayed their censers, and I looked at their heavy, stolid faces, and their booming voices filled the little church, I felt I was away back in the dark ages.

When the service was over and I could examine the place at leisure, I found several fine El Grecos, among them the beautiful and delicate San Martin.

The narrowness of the streets has this great advantage, that, except for the briefest space at noon, there is always some shade to be had. But the narrow streets of Toledo differ from those of Seville. The latter city is built on a level plain, and when you are lost you are lost, helplessly and entirely. Even when you reach an open space there is no view unless the Cathedral is very near, and you catch a glimpse of the graceful tower of La Giralda over the house-tops. But



A PICTURESQUE CORNER

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

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in Toledo, if you keep to the high ground, you are sure of emerging on some eyrie, from which you see the city lie outspread before you, and will find out where you are, in all probability far from where you expected. Or, if you follow the lower levels, sooner or later you strike the river, and then again you know where you are. And you do not weary, for there is always plenty to see by the way. The steepness of the streets renders them impossible for wheeled traffic and makes them strangely quiet. The patient donkeys, with their huge panniers, fill them from side to side; you have to squeeze against the wall as they pass.

If one imagines the streets as they must have been in the olden time, unpaved and unlighted, one can appreciate the remark of the foreign visitor. 'No wonder,' said he, 'that Toledo produces good swords; her streets are so dangerous that everyone must needs go armed to the teeth.' An am-

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bush here would be the easiest thing in the world ; an effective pursuit the most difficult.

But now the streets are lit with electric light, and I have lost my way at midnight in their mazes, without even the mildest adventure.

Some old customs, however, still survive. The night watchman still makes his rounds with staff and lantern ; and if you are wakeful, as hour after hour is rung out by the Cathedral bells, you will hear his monotonous, droning cry.

CHAPTER V

THE CATHEDRAL

I APPROACH this chapter with some diffidence. I know that experts and guide-books join in the praise of this mighty building as one of the triumphs of Gothic architecture. And everyone who writes about it quotes 'Street,' and refers you to 'Street.' This irritates me. I have not read 'Street,' nor have I the slightest intention of ever doing so.

This little book is not an architectural treatise, it is merely a record of personal impressions.

The fact is, it is a mistake for anyone but the specialist to go peering into these technical details, although custom ordains it. The expert makes a minute survey and records his verdict in bulky volumes of portentous dulness. Thereupon the guide-book draws up, with plentiful quotations, a list of things



THE CATHEDRAL—GENERAL VIEW OF MAIN
FAÇADE



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that everyone must see. The ordinary tourist gapes, yawns, reflects that after all 'one must see those things to get value for one's money,' and trudges round after his guide. He understands and appreciates the technical excellences just as much as the passenger on a liner understands and appreciates the mysteries of the engine-room. The engineer loves his engines for themselves, they are to him things of beauty, things of life, but the passenger is content to judge of their qualities from the deck as he sees the vessel cleave its way through the waves.

In a cathedral, if the ordinary man goes in quietly without a guide, and lets the spirit of the place assert itself, he is open to its broad appeals; it soothes and quietens and elevates even though the details and technical beauties pass by him almost unrecognised. They have taken their place in the general impression, enriching and strengthening. After all they are there as parts

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of the whole and not to attract individual attention. And if such details conceal unsuspected gems of beauty, if they are really so much finer than they need be simply to fill their place in the general scheme, why, that is the artist's secret, the secret between him and his devotee. Those things are not for all the world to know.

And so this chapter is written frankly from the point of view of an outsider, ignorant of technicalities, concerned only with the results. It will record chiefly individual impressions of the general aspects, only going into matters of detail when such have proved specially attractive to the writer.

It is difficult to get a good general view of the exterior of the Cathedral. It is situated rather in a hollow, and is crowded in by buildings on all sides. One wishes it had been placed on the site of the Alcázar, from which it would have dominated the country for

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twenty miles round. As it is, all one sees at a little distance is the top of its spire peeping above the houses.

So I have no clear idea of the building as a whole. I have never seen it. The best approach to a general view is to be obtained from just in front of the Ayuntamiento, where there is sufficient clear space to give an uninterrupted view of the grand façade and the graceful spire.

But this situation has its compensations as well as its drawbacks. You come upon the building unawares, and emerge suddenly from a little winding street to find yourself before one of its sumptuous doorways. Of these the richest and perhaps the finest is 'La Puerta de Los Leones,' but my favourite is the less pretentious little doorway 'Del Niño Perdido'—'The Gate of the Lost Child.'

The spire indeed is a thing of beauty, with 'La Giralda' of Seville, so unlike it in every

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way, the finest I have seen in Spain. The tower, of a pinkish yellow stone, raises its pinnacles above the tiled roofs in fine contrast to their picturesque confusion, and the spire proper, tapering delicately, and circled with its three rings of metal rays—representing, I suppose, the crown of thorns—soars away up into the blue.

One gets many unexpected glimpses of it from the narrow streets that press so closely round the Cathedral.

Coming from the Zoco do ver, the starting-point of all excursions, you see it before you as you pass down the Calle del Comercio. A sharp turn to the left, down a steep and narrow street, takes you to the door in the west transept.

Here you have to run the gauntlet of, first, the beggars, then the little boys, and lastly, the so-called guides. The beggars are persistent, but it is beneath their dignity to follow you about much (besides, many of them



THE CATHEDRAL—DOORWAY OF EL NIÑO PERDIDO



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have only one leg), so that if you move on rapidly you get rid of them. The boys are persistent also, and a nuisance, but still more or less amusing. The guides are the most persistent of all, and they have no redeeming features. They are not guides, they are loafers, hooligans—the type that would do anything rather than a day's work. Tall, slim, straight fellows, with broadish shoulders, narrow hips, little bullet heads, and coarse, impudent faces. Dress, a dirty scarf round the neck, a tight jacket and trousers of the cut affected by the Torero when off duty; tight above, very loose at the knee, and tight again at the ankle. Insolent, swaggering fellows. They know as little as the boys, and they lounge round the most beautiful places yawning and sprawling—their presence is the veritable fly in the ointment. In dealing with them I soon ran through my stock of Spanish, but found good forcible English much more serviceable.

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With at least one of these vermin at your heels, you enter the Cathedral.

And now I must confess that my first feeling was one of disappointment—a feeling that even now has hardly worn away.

It is vast and cold. A white expanse. Huge pillars towering up to a great height. A blaze of harsh daylight. In the middle, blocking up the view down the nave, the tawdry gilt of the Coro. (A closer inspection reveals a wealth of rich and beautiful detail, but the tawdriness strikes one first.) Doors opening and banging all round, people promenading, sitting on the bases of the pillars and talking with undropped voices. You ask yourself with amazement, Is this a church? The form is here, but where is the spirit?

Where is that feeling of sanctity that haunts the twilight of our old English churches, robing them as with a garment?

Doubtless this is a vast treasure-house. It seems like a museum. Doubtless there is

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much that on examination will prove to be art of the highest order, but there is much that is tawdry, garish, and vulgar. I hate the painted and gilded images, I hate the tinsel and the artificial flowers, the chapels that only look like puppet-shows.

What the Cathedral would be without its stained-glass windows I do not know, but even they are not sufficient to tone the glare of light. It is cold and white and pitiless.

In fact it is only in the evening that Toledo Cathedral comes into its own. It is quiet and peaceful then. The promenaders have all gone away, the blaring of the organ has ceased, and through the open door you hear the twittering of birds in the cloisters. The shadows darken among the pillars, the beautiful windows begin to glow, and a soft light fills the upper part of the church. It is like the opening of a flower.

Then at last you begin to feel the impressiveness and the dignity of those avenues of

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mighty pillars. The trivialities that annoyed
you are lost, the effects are broad, grand, and
majestic, and at last the building is a temple;
it seems as if the Holy Spirit had entered
with the fall of the twilight.

In general, Gothic architecture does not
appear to me to be suitable for such a coun-
try as Spain. It is an art out of place. The
sunshine of Spain is too strong, the light too
brilliant. The style belongs to more north-
ern climes. Those pillared aisles are born of
the twilight, they are children of the sha-
dow, and are robbed of all their poetry in
the cold light of day. It is as if in Nature's
forest aisles we cut away the sheltering
screen of leaves and let the summer sun beat
down among the naked trunks and bare
branches.

Toledo, Segovia, Burgos, Seville,—in the
light of day they leave me cold, but enter
the little Jewish synagogue of 'El Transito'
—a little gem of the Mudejar style, that



THE CATHEDRAL—INTERIOR



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beautiful blending of Christian and Moslem art. Here is a style which really belongs to Spain. The narrow windows high up, not glazed, but filled with a beautiful lace-work of pierced stone—the coolness, the quiet, and the twilight—this is a little building which is a church. One could worship here.

But the other, the great Gothic cathedral, with its lofty heights and many windows, is, save in the brief twilight hour, too lacking in all that sense of mystery that forms the atmosphere of religion.

To visit the different parts—the choir, the sacristy, and the various chapels—one must procure a ticket and attend at a certain hour. It is not a very satisfactory plan for the visitor. The doors are unlocked, an attendant rushes you through, gabbles a few phrases of stereotyped description, and then on to the next item. But the time is so short that if one finds something interesting, the

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best plan is to devote one's attention entirely to it and ignore the guide.

What fascinated me chiefly in the details of the Coro was the wonderful carving of the choir stalls. The work was entrusted to two famous artists, Philip of Burgundy and Alonso Berruguete, and was finished in 1543, each master carving thirty-five stalls. There is no doubt in my mind as to which I prefer. Borgoñas are graceful, and full of rich detail, but lacking any great distinction; the series of Berruguete are masterpieces of wood-carving. The softer and more yielding medium appears to suit his impetuous nature much more closely than the harder and more formal marble. The work is so much more direct—every touch of the chisel imprints itself at once on the wood and records the impulse of the artist's brain.

The figure which I reproduce is one of marvellous vigour, and in its varying levels of relief seems to spring into life from the back-



THE CATHEDRAL—CARVING OF CHOIR-STALL BY
BERRUGUETE



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ground. And it is only one of many almost equally bold in conception and powerful in execution.

I could have spent hours there, but the great grille was only opened at three o'clock and a service began a few minutes after. Even while I was there the choristers began to take up their stations.

The great retablo in the Capilla Mayor did not impress me. It was the work of many artists, including Philip of Burgundy, and was executed early in the sixteenth century.

I understand that it is 'a magnificent example of florid Gothic. It is divided into five storeys, separated perpendicularly by richly worked columns. The subjects are taken from the New Testament; the profusion of statuettes and details of ornamentation, though great, do not mar the general effect, and the composition and execution are admirable. The central pyramidal custodia looks like filigree work: the Virgin

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is seated under it, with angels playing on instruments: a colossal calvario crowns the whole poem.'

So says the guide-book, and it may be all very true. For my part I can't tell good carving from bad when it is under a coat of paint—in this case 'a coat of many colours'—and my note-book records this gorgeous retablo as 'a terrible jumble of gilt and painted images.'

Up in niches in the wall are the tombs of Mendoza and of Alphonso VII. and his son. Amid the profusion of carving and of gilt and paint and marble which is all around, they look like parcels stuck up on a shelf. This may be glory, but for my resting-place give me rather a quiet country churchyard. Such a one as I have seen nestling amid the trees beside an English village church, or such as Scott describes in the introduction to *Old Mortality*—a peaceful spot away up on a lonely hillside.



THE CATHEDRAL—CHAPEL OF SANTIAGO

100

From a photograph



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Of the chapels, that which pleased me most was the Capilla de Santiago, with the fine alabaster tombs of Don Alvaro de Luna and his wife.

One day, while I was in the Cathedral, there was a service being held in this little chapel, and I was much struck by the curious irreverence of the devout worshippers. One quiet little woman in black sat on the base of Don Alvaro's tomb, her back against that of the kneeling alabaster figure at the corner. All around the people perched themselves with seemingly no more regard for the nature of their surroundings than so many sparrows. A wooden bench or a marble tomb, it was all one, either would make a seat. And the priests and attendants make no objections.

Indeed the Spaniards do not strike me as a religious people any more than as a polite people. There is a certain respect paid to outward forms in each case, but in neither

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is this the manifestation of inward feeling.

They bow and cross themselves when passing the altar. They are punctilious in their sprinklings with holy water. The women invariably observe the form of placing some covering on their heads, even if it is only a handkerchief. I have seen two girls with one shawl spread over the two heads and made to do duty for both. But otherwise men and women alike behave in a church as if they were in the street, laughing and chatting in the most ordinary manner.

The vestments and the jewels I saw little of. I found two fine Grecos in the Vestuario, and a marvellously fine little wooden statue of St Francis, said to be by Alonso Cano, and these occupied all the limited time. The famous Manta of the Virgin del Sagrario, embroidered with 78,000 pearls and many other precious stones, was a striking example of the misuse of materials. It was merely a

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lavish and vulgar display of wealth; the effect was no richer than could have been obtained by the use of corded silks.

Of the wonderfully fine Grecos in the sacristy—the Espolio, and the Apostles—I shall speak fully in a later chapter.

But the most vivid memories which I shall carry away from Toledo Cathedral are of its stained glass.

In the daytime one does not notice them sufficiently, there is so much light inside the church. In the evening, as the sun gets low, they begin to assert themselves more and more strongly, flaming and sparkling with silver and gold, rubies and emeralds.

What a glorious art is that of the worker in stained glass—it is *the* art of colour *par excellence*.

How often has the mere painter, before the brilliance of nature, laid down his palette in despair. 'No,' he says, 'paint can't do it.'

There are no colours to match the blaze

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of sunlight. The keyboard is too limited. The highest note is a dead white, the lowest a black. But think of a whitewashed wall blazing in the Spanish sunshine against a sky of living blue. How is that to be translated into paint? No, it can't be done.

But with stained glass. Ah, here you are painting with the very light of heaven itself. It permeates your colours, shines and sparkles in them; what was dead before has become a living thing.

To work in such a medium is like building up a picture in flames of coloured fire. I want to shout and sing when I look at some of those joyous and triumphant floods of colour. They get into my blood like wine.

In few places is there a more magnificent display of stained glass than in Toledo, a series dating from 1418 to 1560.

In each transept is a fine rose window; in the one a fine clear blue is the prevailing tint, but the other is my favourite. The

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inner part is composed of a series of radiating bars like the spokes of a wheel, filled in with soft rich colours. At the end of each bar is a *quatrefoil*, like a beautiful four-leaved shamrock, and each of these is filled in with a lovely apple green and cherry red. It is a colour harmony so luscious as to make you smack your lips.

Away at the west end of the nave is another rose window, this time of great size. In looking at it you do not think of any design, only of the general effect of colour. The traceries break it up into a large number of facets, so to speak, and it blazes like a magnificent and many-coloured jewel.

Then there is a gorgeous series of four-light windows, each division having a figure in strong colour against an equally brilliant ground. Apple green on red, purple on a mingled green and blue, rich red on a blue, and blue on purple and gold. A sumptuous display.

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There are too quieter Dutch-looking little windows, hidden away in corners, with quaintly prim figures, and soft, harmonious colour.

But I think my favourite of all is a little three-light window in one of the smaller chapels. In the central panel is the Virgin and Child, seated on a golden throne. The throne stands out against a deep ruby red which fills the top of the window, and the Virgin's robes are rich purple and blue. In each side panel is a saint, the colours following out the same harmony—blue predominating on the one side, green on the other.

If one could only have days of twilight to dream away among those windows instead of one short hour!

CHAPTER VI

THE ALCÁZAR, THE HOSPITALS, AND SAN JUAN DE LOS REYES

THE building which dominates Toledo is the Alcázar. Built on the highest point of the rocky hill on which the city stands, it is seen far and near. A great square hulk, plain almost to ugliness, a tower with high peaked roof at each corner, it is yet full of a sort of dignity.

Seen from the Bridge of Alcántara, it crowns the eminence in an almost threatening manner, it broods sullenly over the Zocodover, and from far away on the Vega it is always the first building of Toledo to separate itself from the general mass.

But it seems most impressive of all by night against a starlit sky. One night in August it was so hot that I could not sleep in my bedroom, and took my mattress and

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pillow out on to the roof of the hotel. I was just under the Alcázar, which loomed up big and vast and silent—fit to house an army, but all dark save the windows in one tower. The city was full of faint noises, the bells of the Cathedral boomed out the hours as they passed, the sereno followed with his long, even drone, meaning, I suppose, 'Two o'clock, and a fine morning,' and I lay and watched the moon move slowly round behind the great square towers, which stood up in silhouette against the old familiar stars.

A strange and chequered history the place has, the history of Toledo in miniature. Its commanding site is obviously the place for a citadel, and we may assume that from the time of the Romans, a fortress of some kind stood there. The present building dates from the time of Alphonso VI., who built a palace or fortress there in the eleventh century. It stood for several hundred years,



THE ALCAZAR-PATIO
From a photograph



THE ALCÁZAR

and was practically rebuilt by Charles V. and his son Philip II. In 1710 it was almost destroyed by a disastrous fire, and was restored some sixty years later by Cardinal Lorenzana. When the French evacuated the city in 1810, they set fire to the Alcázar as a parting compliment; and again in 1886 the building was gutted by fire, nothing but the bare walls being left.

A terrible and majestic sight it must have been, the Alcázar in flames. I can imagine it from down by the Bridge of Alcántara. The huge pile away up in the sky belching forth fire like a volcano; the great billows of smoke, picked out with myriads of sparks, rolling slowly over the Vega. The crowd in the foreground, their startled faces lit up by the red glare; and, below, the Tagus, now too on fire, repeating in its depths all the horrors of the sky.

All that now remains of the interior is the great patio and the magnificent staircase,

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built in the sixteenth century. Like the exterior, they impress you by their immense size. A regiment could drill in the courtyard, thirty men could march abreast up the stair. Architecturally they are a fine foil to the ornateness which so much abounds in Toledo, being restrained and severe, appealing more by justness of proportion than by richness of detail.

But this is all that is left; the rich apartments, the chapel, all that made the place a palace, have been swept away. The Alcázar, standing on its lofty height, with the wide plain stretching beneath it for twenty miles on every side, is now a mere empty shell.

Just below, opposite the Inn of Cervantes, stands the Hospital of Santa Cruz, built by a bequest of the great Cardinal Mendoza, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, as a home for orphans. It is a magnificent example of the Plateresque style, and though to a severe taste the riot of ornament

THE ALCÁZAR

is apt to become rather cloying, for the Plateresque is even more ornate than the florid Gothic, it is in many parts so exquisite as to compel even the most unwilling admiration.

The main façade is most striking. You pass from the Zocodover through the Arco de la Sangre, walk down the narrow street for a few yards, and then all at once you come upon it, a complete surprise.

The doorway is one sumptuous mass of carving, and above is a row of three windows hardly less rich. The stone is a rich yellow, and, facing south, the whole façade is bathed in a flood of golden light from morn till eve. I never can think of that doorway without this sensation of brilliant sunshine, which seems to form part of the building.

After the fire in the Alcázar in 1886, the building was used as an infantry school, but it has now been placed on the list of 'national monuments.' It is in the hands

THE HEART OF SPAIN

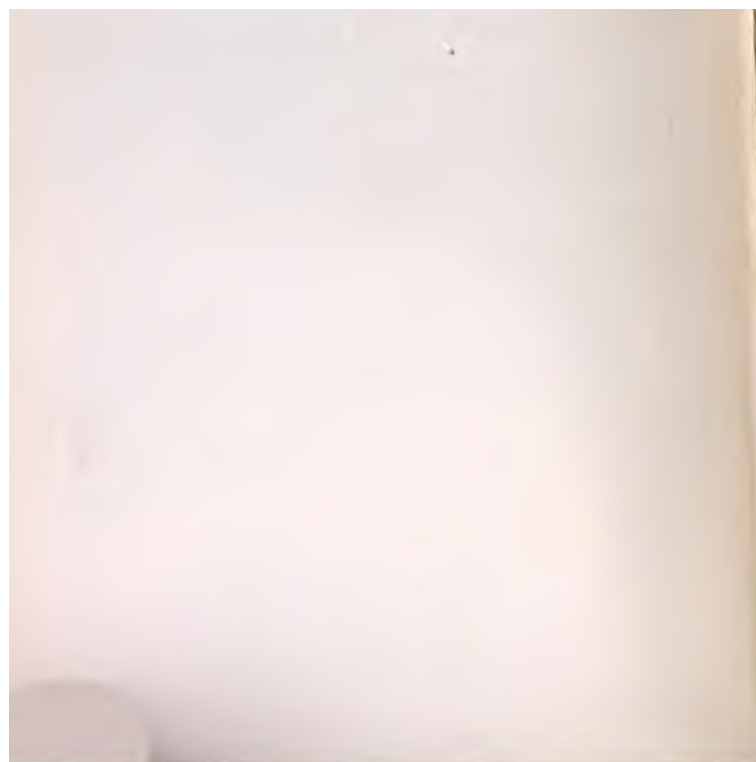
of the restorers, being destined to form a provincial museum accommodating the collection now in the Museo of San Juan de Los Reyes, and the library now in the archbishop's palace; surely a most fitting use for the building.

But Spanish restorations are notoriously protracted and bungling. The State is short of money, the list of national monuments is enormous and swelled by the names of many buildings quite worthless, and what work is done is often misapplied. Only a few weeks ago, after the heavy autumn rains, part of the roof of the beautiful patio fell in; and within a few days of the occurrence a similar catastrophe occurred at the church of San Juan de Los Reyes.

Rodrigo Amador de Los Rios, a well-known Spanish critic, writes bitterly to the papers saying that these cases are only two among many. The mezquita of Bib-al-Mardóm, he points out, is a building absolutely unique



HOSPITAL OF SANTA CRUZ—DOORWAY



THE ALCÁZAR

in Spain, yet it is not even on the list of national monuments, and is being allowed to go to ruin. In the synagogue of El Tránsito too, another unique building, the scaffolding still stands, but no work has been done for years. One almost feels inclined to hand over such monuments to the Church; they certainly can raise money to keep their buildings in proper repair, though the taste of their restorations is often doubtful.

But though the workmen were in Santa Cruz, I made friends with the keeper and his wife and children, and was allowed to wander about the place at my will.

The building is in the form of a cross, the arms of nearly equal length. The partition walls are being cut away, and now you look from end to end of the vast galleries, with their rich timber roofs, ideal rooms for a museum. The lower storey is a little dark, and will probably be utilised as the library

THE HEART OF SPAIN

portion; but the upper part should form a magnificent museum and picture-gallery. In the centre where the two great salons cross is a beautiful little chapel with graceful arches, lit above by a little cupola.

In the precincts are two patios, one of them the most exquisite of all in Toledo. It is among patios what the cloisters of San Juan de Los Reyes are among cloisters. Of all the beautiful spots of Toledo, none have fascinated me more than the patio of Santa Cruz, so graceful, so seductive, and so charming, even though at present its beauties are half hidden by heaps of débris and piles of bricks and mortar. At one side is a staircase rising to the upper gallery, in itself a marvel of richness and worthy of the patio.

After the Hospital of Santa Cruz the most interesting is that of Afuera, so called because it is outside (*afuera*) the walls.

I went there one rainy day. The hospital has a fine patio of the simple, rather severe

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style of that of the Alcázar, a delightful change from the soft luxuriance of the patio of Santa Cruz.

But the chief treasures of the place are in the chapel. I found there half-a-dozen men and women cleaning the place under the superintendence of a nun. Their methods scared me.

In one way it is good to leave pictures in the situations for which they were originally designed: you have no doubt as to the painter's intention. Any arrangements or adaptations of colour, or light and shade, to suit the requirements of the place, have their full value. But what I saw there that day would serve as a strong argument in favour of the removal of valuable works, at any cost, from the hands of the vandals who have them in charge.

I saw one hoary-headed, wall-eyed old sinner slashing away at an El Greco with a big feather duster on the end of a long pole.

THE HEART OF SPAIN

The picture was in a bad condition, and no wonder. The canvas hung loosely and flapped about under his energetic treatment. There was a big rent in it where on some other occasion he or a confederate had pushed the pole through, and the paint was falling off in flakes. It was enough to make one's hair stand on end.

Indeed I could not restrain myself, and going to the nun, endeavoured to show her the enormity of the proceedings, but couldn't make her realise that there was anything wrong.

The church is especially rich in Grecos. An altar-piece, one of the wild, fantastic visions, a mass of seething images flung pell-mell on the canvas just as they come; distorted limbs, gigantic figures, and pigmies all jumbled together; heavenly figures seated on paper clouds above, angels throwing wild somersaults below, ecstatic saints with upturned faces and very *retroussé*



HOSPITAL OF AFUERA—TOMB OF CARDINAL TAVERA,
BY BERRUGUETE

From a photograph



THE ALCÁZAR

noses; a lackadaisical Christ in the centre, and a very unkempt John the Baptist at the side—it is a curious mixture. But in spite of all the absurdities the picture has a certain dignity and power, it is so dominated by the one central idea.

The colour too, which, in the similar examples in the Prado I had been apt to pronounce vile, falls into place naturally in the light of the church.

On the other side of the church is a commonplace altar-piece by another artist; but the little picture above it is a Greco—a real gem. Not the mad, inspired Greco, but Greco in a quiet and tranquil mood. The subject is the old, ever-fresh subject of the Virgin and Child.

But the masterpiece of all is the great portrait of Cardinal Tavera, the founder of the hospital. It is hung rather high, but I was able to get a little step-ladder and study it at my leisure.

THE HEART OF SPAIN

There is yet another portrait of Tavera, in a different medium, in stone, not in painting, and representing him not in life but in death. This is the beautiful tomb of white marble by Berruguete. The figure of the cardinal lies seemingly asleep, the marble features suffused by an expression of profound peace. It is at once a portrait of the man, a commentary on his life, and a benediction.

It was the last work of the great sculptor, who died while his son was still putting the last touches to the pedestal. In its quiet serenity and repose it is a curious contrast to the concentrated vigour of his wood-carvings in the choir of the Cathedral, figures that seem to burst forth from the wooden panels that imprison them. Here all is restfulness and peace.

' Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please.'

Of the monastery of San Juan de Los



SAN JUAN DE LOS REYES—DETAIL OF CARVING



THE ALCÁZAR

Reyes little remains but the church. But as the Alcázar dominates the one side of Toledo, so does the church of San Juan de Los Reyes the other. From anywhere beyond the Bridge of San Martin the grey building perched up on the height draws the eye and holds it. Even the nest of scaffolding, which at present obscures it, cannot destroy its beauty. A nearer view shows the elegance and richness of the exterior, and reveals the walls of the church strangely garnished with hundreds of great iron chains, said to have been struck off the Christian captives released on the conquest of Granada.

The interior is almost too ornate for my taste; it has besides unpleasant associations. For one day the verger, a fat, insolent, little loud-voiced man, was showing me a chest of curios he had for sale—tiles, bits of metal-work, and so on. A bit of bronze carvings slipped from my fingers and smash-

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ed a little porcelain medallion. Providence had delivered me into his hands, and I could not escape under six pesetas. The joke was that, when I went back some time after, he did not recognise me, and wanted to swindle me some more.

But the cloisters of San Juan de Los Reyes are its chief beauty. All your world here is four walls of white stone, fretted with the traceries of mullioned windows; in the centre green shrubs and trees, and above, the vaulting of deep clear blue—the blue that is so rich and strong and yet filled with such an intensity of palpitating light. The noises from the outside world float in dimly, sounding very faint and far away, accentuating the stillness more than silence. One understands the meaning of the phrase, ‘the seclusion of a cloister,’ after seeing such a place as this. For such abodes of peacefulness are not to be found in princes’ palaces. The highest art is always religious



SAN JUAN DE LOS REYES—CLOISTERS

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From a photograph



THE ALCÁZAR

art, and here one breathes a spirit of delicate religious exaltation.

Artificial, no doubt; a refuge from the rude hurly-burly of the world, to seek which might well appear to the robust as merely a form of cowardice, a weak indulgence. But to the hard fighter, the man who fought with his brains, and who, after strenuous years, found his bodily strength ebbing, the attraction of such a quiet retreat, with its odour of sanctity and its atmosphere of studious retirement, may well have been irresistible, for in those days such peace and retirement were only to be found in the bosom of the Church.

CHAPTER VII

EL GRECO

No memoir of Toledo, however superficial in character, could fail to devote some space to the great painter who identified himself so completely with the city, Domenico Theotocopulos, better known as El Greco.

Little is known of the facts of his life beyond the barest outline. Even the date of his birth is uncertain ; but he was a native of Crete, and studied painting in Italy, falling under the influence of the later Venetian school.

He came to Spain about 1577, and made his home in Toledo, where he remained for the rest of his life. On his death in 1614, he was buried in the church of Santo Domingo el Antiguo.

His earlier works are markedly influenced by the Venetian masters, but even they are

EL GRECO

distinctly original in feeling. Soon he had cast off all trammels of tradition and adopted a style so distinct and personal that it is not too much to call him the first of the Impressionists, the forerunner, and to some extent the teacher, of the still greater Velasquez.

But while Spain's two greatest painters—for one looks upon El Greco almost as a native of his adopted country—were thus to a great extent similar in aim, and carrying out the same great work of evolution in art, never did two men differ more widely in character and temperament. Velasquez is almost preternaturally self-contained and reserved. He stands aloof and looks down on human nature with a calm, all-seeing eye. One feels that there is something almost superhuman in the vast catholicity of his outlook, in the unerring sureness of his touch. He seems to move among men and women like a god, without a touch of mortal

THE HEART OF SPAIN

weakness. In his great picture 'Las Meninas'—the painting which reveals to a wondering world the pure, cool beauty of daylight—the princess, the maids of honour, the king and queen reflected in the mirror, all play their little parts as puppets in the show; the figure of the painter seems to stand apart, a looker-on, superior to all, viewing the scene with that serene inner vision of his, to reproduce it with unfaltering hand for all the world to see and know.

But Greco was a genius of quite another type. His was a highly nervous nature. Little of the aloofness of the onlooker about him, much of the over-abundant zeal of the enthusiast—even of the fanatic. I think he can be best described by a contrast. In his *Renaissance in Italy*, J. A. Symonds thus writes of Giotto: 'The health of his whole nature and his robust good sense are everywhere apparent in his solid, concrete, human work of art. There is no

EL GRECO

trace of mysticism, no ecstatic piety, nothing morbid or hysterical in his imagination.' If we take the converse of this description we have a portrait of El Greco. Robust good sense seems the quality most absent from his work; his nature seems not to have been a healthy one, but essentially morbid; his art deals not with the solid and the concrete, but with the immaterial and the mystical.

His religious pictures are often almost hysterical in their exaggerated expression of devotion. What a gulf there lies between even his fine 'Crucifixion' in the Prado, and the majestic treatment of the same subject by Velasquez. In El Greco religious feeling seems always tinged with that ecstatic sentiment which we associate with the 'religious revival.'

His great fault as a painter is a certain theatrical exaggeration. When he wishes to give dignity to his figures by height, he shoots

THE HEART OF SPAIN

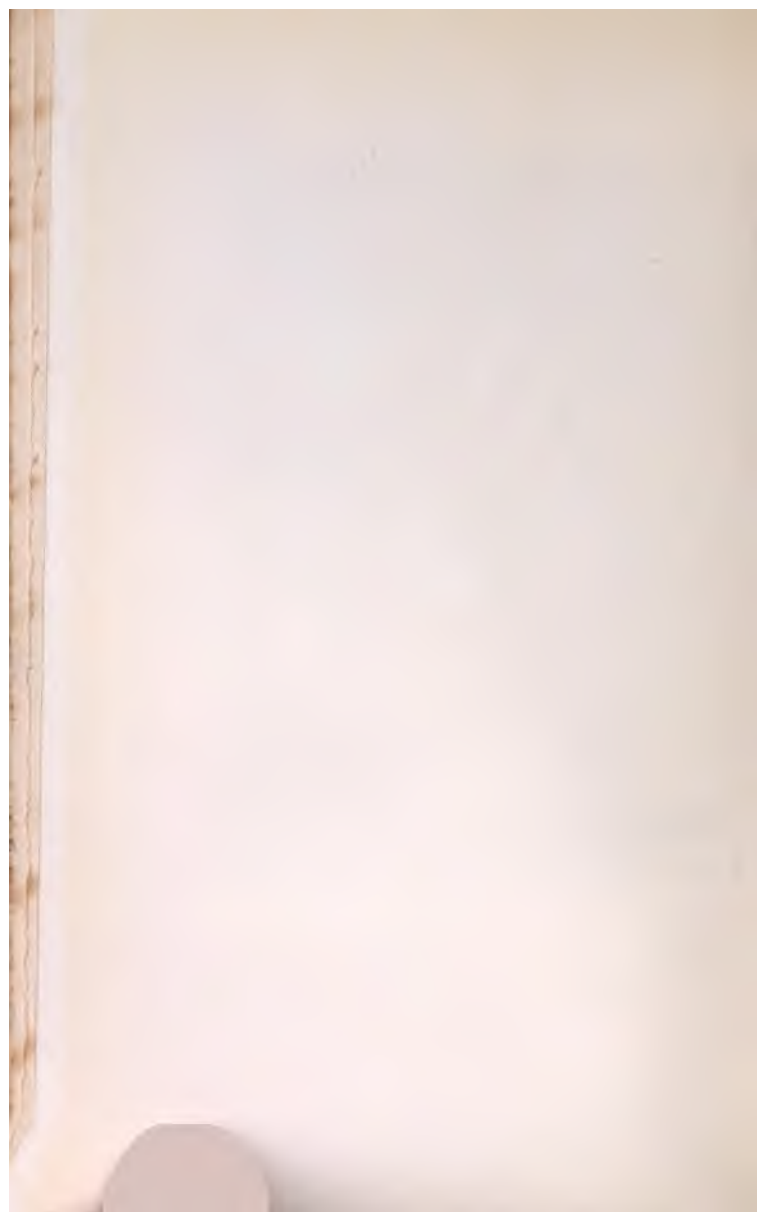
them up into shambling giants of seven or eight feet high. His contrasts of light and shadow are often violent, his colour is often forced. But where his genius stands unquestioned, in spite of a myriad of the most obvious and irritating faults, is, first, in his power of vivid presentment of a scene, and, second, in his absolutely unerring insight. At his best he paints as if inspired—by God or the devil.

He many times painted his own portrait, but of all these records of the man none is more instructive than that painted late in life, now in the collection of Sr. D. A. de Beruete. A man with a nervous face, tremulous mouth, and great hollow eyes; the forehead is high, the eyebrows prominent and peaked, with an appearance as if they twitched under excitement like those of a gorilla.

Looking at this portrait, you can understand how he would paint his pictures at



PORTRAIT OF EL GRECO, BY HIMSELF (IN THE
COLLECTION OF A. DE BERUETE)



EL GRECO

white heat—the wildness of the drawing, the indifference to everything but to get the effect by any means whatever, the impatient carelessness which covered the edge of the canvas with smears of paint to try the tints—all these are explained.

It is not a well-balanced face, the spirit seems stronger than the body; but I think we may dismiss the tales of El Greco's madness as exaggerations. For in all, even the most eccentric of his paintings, the main idea is unerringly followed. To judge him we must get at his point of view, and in this he was quite out of touch with his contemporaries. He was an Impressionist, at a time when Impressionism was unknown. In his later religious canvases, painted to be hung high up in dimly-lighted churches, what he depicts is in the main a scene—an effect of lighting. He paints the Baptism of Christ, the Ascension, or the Last Judgment, as if it were a vision seen by flash-light. He has

THE HEART OF SPAIN

no time to trouble about anatomical details. Limbs may be distorted, angels flying about in a medley of swirling legs and arms and wings; features may be distorted and faces depart far from the canons of beauty; he cannot stop to think of such details as these—he must get the main idea down on canvas before the vivid scene in his imagination fades. And once the vision faded, how could such a painter alter and retouch?

This is where he differs from his predecessors of the Italian schools. He does not build up his pictures, dreamily, perfectly, balancing form against form, tint against tint, texture against texture. He gives you a rough but brilliant sketch of his subject as a thing seen. His restless mind is behind the brush all the time.

In his dreamy saints, his tall ecstatic St Francis, the same principle holds. What to El Greco are the academic rules which limit the height of the figure to eight heads?—he

E L G R E C O

shoots up his gaunt saint in the lank brown robes to an absurd height,—but that is a small matter. What he also does, and what is vastly more important, is to portray with an almost unearthly insight and sympathy the peculiar type of the religious enthusiast. The prominent eyes, the weak chin, the gentle, benign expression, I have seen such men to-day in the Salvation Army. The type is still alive.

But it is in his portraits that Greco reaches the most sublime heights. Here he is unsurpassed—one is almost inclined to say unrivalled. It is a painting, as it were, by second sight. He seems to get right at the personality of his sitter, and by some occult means to transfer the man's very soul to canvas.

There is a portrait of an unknown man in the Prado in Madrid that I can never look at without a sort of shudder. I set him down as a Spanish soldier, one of those wolves who deluged the Netherlands with blood. An evil,

THE HEART OF SPAIN
unscrupulous boldness glares at you from
his bloodshot eyes; cruelty unrestrained
lurks in his drooping mouth; but there is
too that power, that masterfulness, which
in those days made Spain ruler of half the
world. A very fiend in human shape.

Such a painting is a historical document,
and so are many of El Greco's portraits.
Were all the records of history blotted out,
the old grandees of Spain would still live for
ever on his canvases.

And here there is a curious contrast be-
tween the portraits of Velasquez and those
of El Greco. Perhaps the type had already
become less pure, anyhow the portraits of
Velasquez are much less typically Span-
iards. They are men and women, their
national characteristics are forgotten, we
look at them from a broader standpoint as
human beings.

Just as Madrid is the Mecca of all students
of Velasquez, so is Toledo that of the lovers



THE ESPOLIO, BY EL GRECO (IN THE
CATHEDRAL)

THE HEART OF SPAIN

Though in some respects less interesting than the later works in so far as it shows less fully the personal development of the painter, yet I regard this as perhaps the most perfect of his works—excepting only some of the later portraits. It bears no marks of immaturity, it is a work complete in every sense, and marks fittingly the culmination of the first stage of the artist's growth.

A smaller version of the same subject is in the church of Santa Leocadia, but in the dim light I could not decide whether it was a first sketch or a copy.

Of a later period, I should say, are a beautiful little picture in the Capilla de Santa Anna and a small altar-piece in the chapel of the hospital of Afuera. Both are essentially colour studies, and of the two the latter is, if anything, the finer. It is the old subject, the Virgin and Child. The mother, a charmingly gracious figure, quiet and

a

EL GRECO

peaceful, with just a shade of sadness, is robed in crimson, with a skirt of dull pale blue. The figure of an old woman is to the left, a male figure to the right, both bending over the mother and child. The sky is of a beautiful greeny hue, and, in its framing of dull and yellowish plaster-work, the colour harmony is perfect.

This is one point to note about Greco's church pictures. In the strong light of the Prado gallery their colour looks harsh and violent, but hung in the position for which they were painted, they fit in perfectly with their surroundings.

But the best known of all El Greco's works, although to my mind far from the most admirable, is the famous 'Burial of Count Orgaz,' in the church of Santo Tomé. It was hailed as a masterpiece by his fellow townsmen, and still is the pride of the Toledans. But in this picture there seems to me to be a lack of that unity which is inseparable

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from all the greatest works of art. The human figures below and the angelic hosts above are too incongruous. They do not harmonise; the picture falls into two distinct parts.

But taken piecemeal there is a great deal that is fine in the picture—much that is magnificent. The beautiful head of the little boy; the dead count lying cold and stiff in his damascened armour; the gorgeously arrayed patriarchal figures bending over him; above all, the wonderful frieze of heads of the attendant mourners—all these are admirable. It is this last feature that has captured the plaudits of the Toledans. It is hailed as a unique series of portrait studies of the most absolute fidelity. Here we have depicted once and for all the Toledan nobility of the sixteenth century. Long nervous faces, much the same types as we see to-day, but, it seems to me, with more vitality. For Spain in those days was still at the top of her



*THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN, BY EL
GRECO (IN THE CHURCH OF SAN VICENTE)*



EL GRECO

fortunes, only just beginning to totter to her fall.

A unity of one sort the picture has. All the company are dominated by the one emotion. They are all taking part in the sacred rites of the burial.

In the Cathedral, besides the 'Espolio,' are a number of later works, a beautiful and severe St Francis, full of devotional fervour, and a fine series of the Apostles treated in a bold, broad fashion.

Some of the most interesting of El Greco's works are to be found in the little museum of San Juan de Los Reyes. Among others is a panoramic view of Toledo, with a map of the city. It is interesting to note how little in its essential features it has changed in the three centuries. The point of view is from the high ground just beyond the hospital of Afuera, near where the bull-ring now stands. The Bridge of Alcántara has a square tower at each end; there seem to be a few

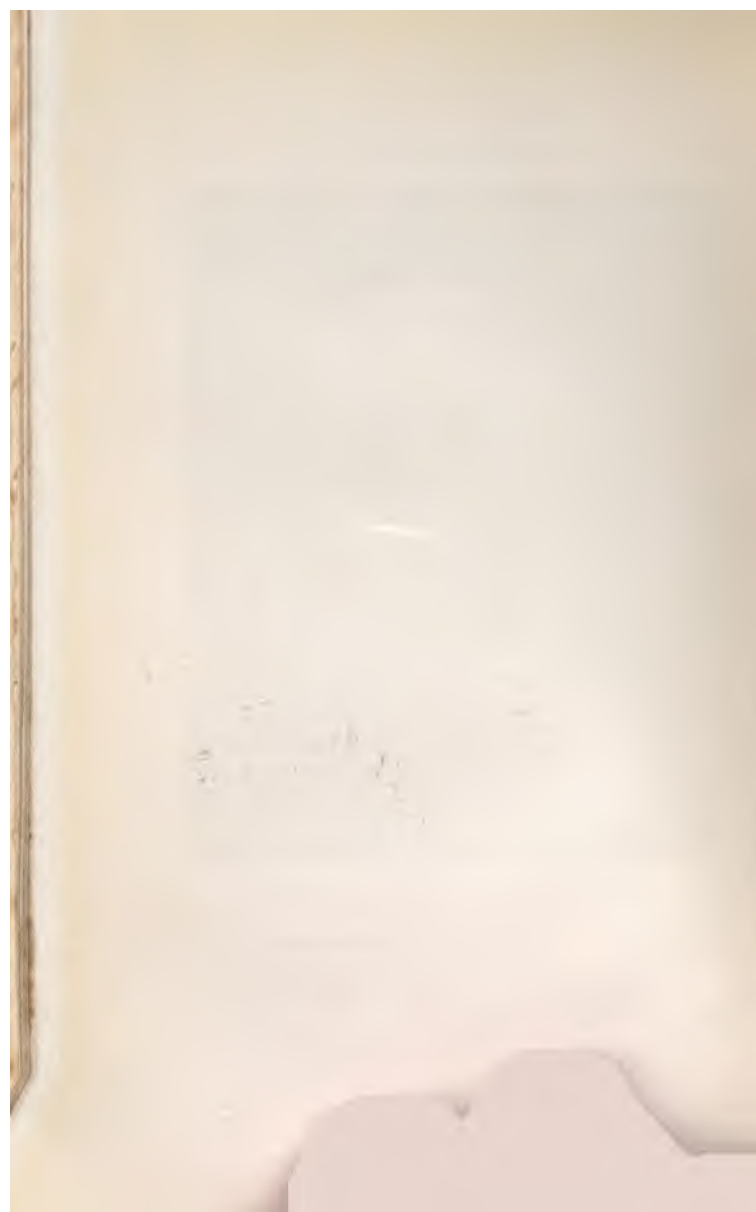
THE HEART OF SPAIN

more church towers, but that is almost all the difference. The Alcázar, then as now, dominates the city from its commanding height. The spire of the Cathedral peeps up from the lower ground behind. There are fewer gaps in the buildings within the walls, but in the main Greco would find little changed in the outward appearance of the town were he to revisit it to-day.

Of the more fantastic works, one of the most eccentric is the 'Baptism of Christ' in the hospital of Afuera, while other examples less marked exist in the church of Santa Domingo el Antiguo and elsewhere. But too much has been made of these Blakesque visions with their gnarled and distorted limbs, and their medley of angels and cherubs of half-a-dozen different sizes. They are powerful impressions dashed off evidently at a great speed, intended to be looked at as a whole, not examined in detail. Their very imperfections of drawing—all, be



PORTRAIT OF CARDINAL TAVERA (UPPER PART ONLY), BY EL GRECO (IN THE HOSPITAL OF AFUERA)



EL GRECO

it noted, exaggerations—and the violence of the colouring, add to the force with which they arrest the attention. Hung in a dimly lighted church, they perfectly answer their purpose.

But it is in his portraits that we find El Greco in his most serious mood. He did not trifle with his sitters, and in each case you feel that he gives us the very man.

Two fine examples exist in the museum of San Juan de Los Reyes—unprotected by glass, and standing on a shelf among fragments of carved work, etc.—one a fine impressionist study of Covarrubias, and the other of Juan de Avila, an unshaven but humorous-looking old rascal.

But the finest portrait of all is that of Cardinal Tavera in the hospital of Afuera—a veritable masterpiece. I really do not know a finer head of an intellectual old man, refined and cultured. It makes me think of the Watts portrait of Cardinal Manning.

THE HEART OF SPAIN

It breathes like it a serene, ascetic dignity. The flesh-tints are quiet in tone, running to greys and blacks in the shadows, and wonderfully modelled,—a haunting face. The painting is a worthy companion to the magnificent tomb of the Cardinal by Berruguete in the same chapel.

And while it is his more eccentric works that perhaps render El Greco most interesting as an innovator and a pioneer, it is his rounded masterpieces such as this work—a portrait which it is little flattery to call perfect—that have earned him his place among the few great painters of the world. And to this charmed circle Spain sends but two representatives — Velasquez and El Greco.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FASCINATION OF TOLEDO

Two cities only I love, Edinburgh and Toledo; and the Edinburgh man will understand when I say that Toledo is the Edinburgh of Spain.

Both are ancient capitals, though Toledo is by far the older of the two. And the story of Toledo is interwoven with the story of Spain, as that of Edinburgh is with the story of Scotland; every stone is a page of national history.

Edinburgh, beaten and drenched by the rains of many winters, swept by centuries of bitter winds, stands up against the grey skies, cold and gaunt and graceful. Toledo, worn and grim, parched by the scorching sun year after year, burns ever a deeper and a deeper yellow under the blazing sky. How different they are, but each how beautiful.

DISTANT VIEW OF TOLEDO FROM THE VEGA

*From a water-colour
by the Author*





THE FASCINATION OF TOLEDO

And yet I have seen the two almost exchange aspects: Edinburgh, glowing beneath an October sun, with almost the golden glory of Toledo; Toledo, in a quiet evening hour, a cool northern purple against the saffron sky.

But Toledo in a sense, far otherwise than Edinburgh, is an ancient city; for in Edinburgh the modern element grows and thrives. In Toledo the new element has never entered in. If one thinks of any modern city and compares it with Toledo, one realises at once how great the differences are. Take for instance even Madrid.

The great confused, crowded railway stations, the electric cars with their perpetually clanging bells, the ill-conditioned cab-drivers with their hooters—the first time I heard one a yard behind I thought it was a motor, and jumped—where are these in Toledo?

THE HEART OF SPAIN

The railway? You leave that outside and walk a quarter of a mile to the city gate.

Electric cars? Why, the streets of Toledo will hardly admit a donkey cart, they are so narrow, and they are steep as the roof of a house. I have hardly ever seen a cab in Toledo. Bicycles are unknown there, motor cars are few and far between, and in the streets seem as out of place as a locomotive. The people walk or ride, and the donkey is the favourite beast of burden.

And then the architecture of Madrid! the garish, tawdry over-ornamentation everywhere, only made tolerable by the beautiful sunlight; the brawling, noisy Puerta del Sol;—compare these with the grand masses of Toledo, its picturesque, winding streets and old church towers!

The electric light indeed one has in Toledo, but it is not offensively brilliant, and the lamps and fittings have a dilapidated look



ON THE BRIDGE OF ALCÁNTARA

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

THE HEART OF SPAIN
as if even they were very old, as indeed no
doubt they are.

It is this completeness that marks Toledo.
Nothing is incongruous, the new and the
old do not jostle each other as in so many
haunts of the antiquarian; the new has
never been able to secure a foothold.

The peasant on his donkey that you meet
crossing the bridge is just as you might
have met him hundreds of years ago, the
city behind him is just as it was then. When
you cross the Tagus you leave the busy
world far behind, and breathe the very at-
mosphere of antiquity.

And somehow I think one gets a stronger
impression of antiquity from these haunt-
ing echoes of the past than one would if
transported into the centre of mediæval life.
I should imagine that one's chief feeling then
would be surprise that everything seemed
so new, so busy, and so bustling. If one
were in the midst of it, the past would ap-

THE FASCINATION OF TOLEDO

pear a matter-of-fact round of everyday duties, the petty details would soon absorb all the attention, its sordid side would assert itself all too strongly, but at this distance of time all that survives is the pure gold. The dross has been refined away. Not that there are no shadows in the picture. No, the grim and unhappy tales are in the majority, but the petty and the trivial are forgotten. After the lapse of a few hundred years even the crimes are interesting, for otherwise they would never have been remembered. With distance the picture grows broader and simpler, and in a sense clearer, as the confusing details drop out. The prosaic life of every day is crystallised into a few sparkling legends. All that is left is the quintessence of human experience.

But in a city like Toledo the most powerful of all are the dumb histories. The very stones speak—not in words, we would not have them do so for worlds,—but vaguely

THE HEART OF SPAIN

and poignantly, as in strains of music, they exhale the very spirit of ancient history. You cannot feel lonely sitting under the city walls: not, that is, if you have fallen under the spell of Toledo.

But there is more in the fascination of Toledo than even the glamour of the past; there is the spirit of beauty, which is eternal. It is a city of pictures.

The artist who could really paint Toledo would be a great artist. And I know one at least who returns to it year after year. But there are many pictures of Toledo that can never be committed to canvas. I cannot think of Toledo without thinking in pictures.

No view of any city have I seen that approaches in grandeur either of the two approaches to Toledo from across the Tagus—the one from just beyond the Bridge of Alcántara, the other from beyond the Bridge of San Martin. The man who would deal with such subjects must work on a big scale.

THE FASCINATION OF TOLEDO

The chords are great crashing chords, the melody is deep and full-throated: everything is massive and majestic. It hardly seems a city built for ordinary men, the approaches are so magnificent, the masses tossed about in so masterly and careless a fashion. It seems the work of Titans.

But within the city itself, amid the tortuous streets, are beauties less overpowering and of a more familiar nature. One does not need to seek picturesque corners, one has only to choose. That is one reason why I like to go alone in Toledo, unaccompanied and unguided. Every walk is a voyage of discovery. The gems you pick up are in a sense your own; perhaps no one ever saw them before, perhaps no one may ever see them just like that again.

Most delightful of all are the little patios which so many of these blank walls enshrine.

You pass a half-open door, peep in, and there is your little picture. A cool, shady

THE HEART OF SPAIN

court (for a canvas awning is stretched above and the sunlight only penetrates in a few stray splashes), a vine, a honeysuckle in bloom, a canary; and, picnicking in the midst of it all, the happy owners.

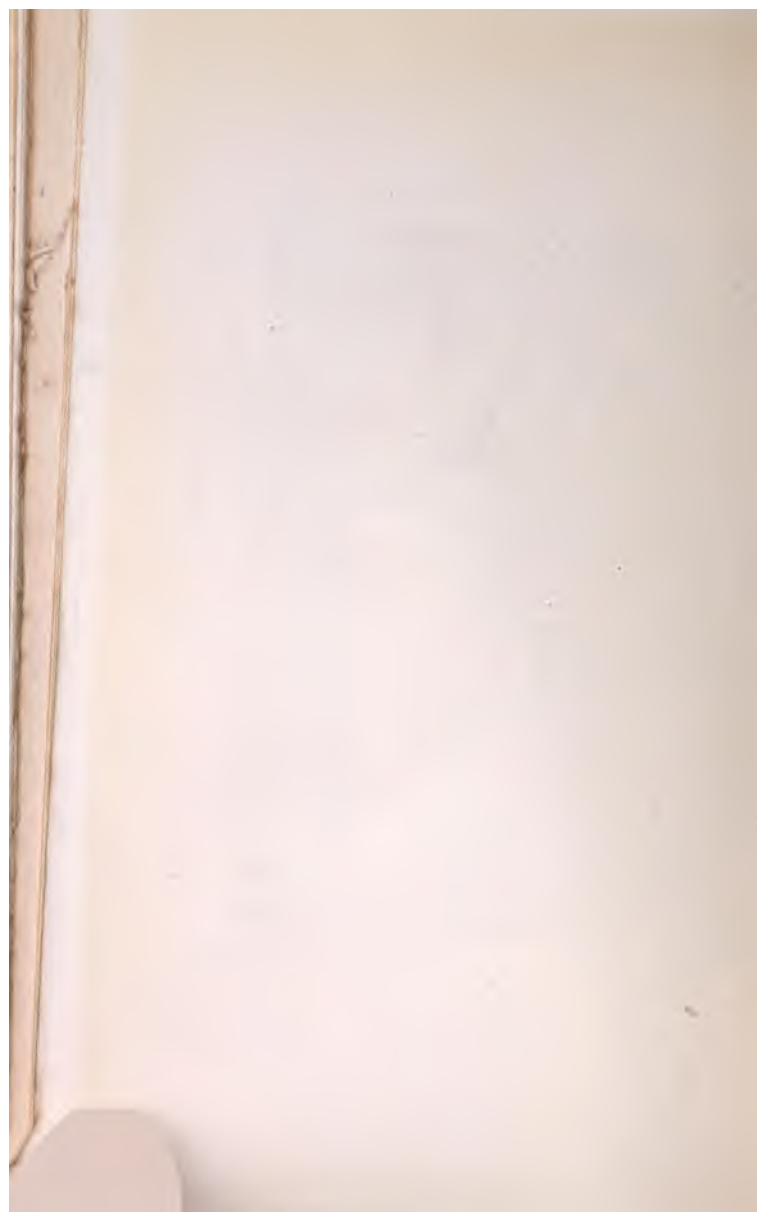
Often too the most unpretentious exterior contains treasures of architecture. The pillars of the patio will have rich capitals worthy of some cathedral: the plaster-work of the walls will awaken memories of the Alhambra.

Perhaps the finest example I have seen is the old Jewish house near the synagogue of El Transito. It was formerly the house of Samuel Levi, the treasurer of Pedro the Cruel, and the researches of Professor Cosío have brought to light the interesting fact that in all probability it was also for a time the home of El Greco, the painter. It is now the property of the Marquis de la Vega, who has tastefully restored what was almost a ruin.



STREET SCENE—OUTSIDE CHURCH OF SANTIAGO

From a photograph



THE FASCINATION OF TOLEDO

The Marquis was absent, but through the kind offices of a friend I obtained a card of admission. This was all very well, but the sturdy old porter in charge could not read, and did not wish to admit me. However, I told him it was all written on the card, and looking very wise, and scanning it very intently, he decided at last to let me in.

The patio was charming, the doorways rich with plaster-work, like that of El Tran-sito a few yards away, and several of the rooms had dados of beautiful tiles.

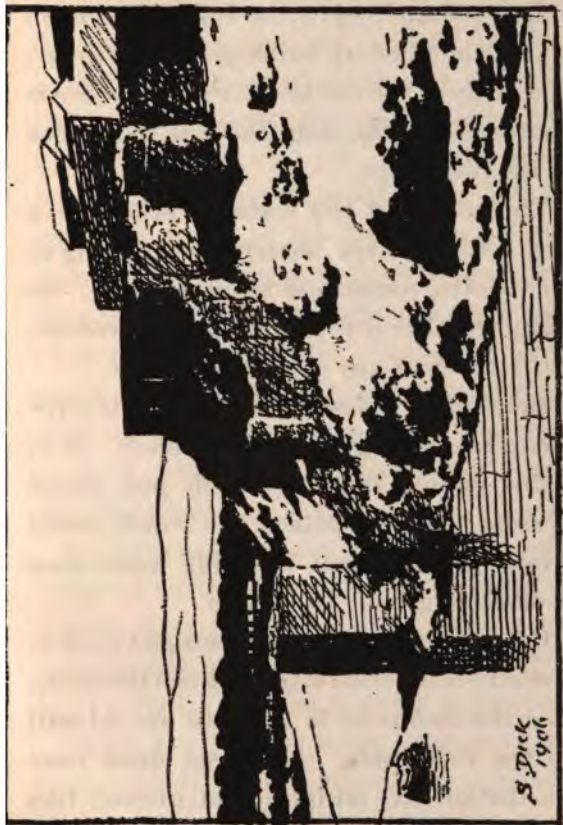
But I have deferred too long mention of the Tagus, the very life-blood of Toledo.

It is wonderful what a transformation a river works in Spain, and the Tagus is really a river—not a dried-up torrent like the Manzanares, a few threads of water lost in a wilderness of sand, but a big brimming river.

Coming from Madrid you cross a wide

THE HEART OF SPAIN
sweep of naked plain, and the change is
delightful when you strike the valley of the
Tagus. Everything is richer and fresher,
and the course of the river is marked by
the trees which line its banks. After Algo-
dor, the junction for Toledo, the train runs
by the river-side through rich fields and
pleasant pastures. Close to the stream is
the Palace of Galiana, in the old Moorish
days famous even among palaces for its
wonderful beauty, and standing in the midst
of luxuriant gardens. Now, alas! all that is
left is the empty shell, the bare walls stand-
ing in the open fields. It is still, however, a
pleasant place to linger, especially in the
cool of the evening when the city stands
silhouetted against the sunset sky.

Passing under the Bridge of Alcántara,
the river enters a deep cleft in the hills,
which surrounds the city on three sides.
The scene in the gorge is often full of stern
beauty. The purple-grey crags, the parched



BAÑOS DE LA CAVA AND RUINS OF WAMBA'S PALACE

*From a pen-and-ink drawing
by the Author*

THE HEART OF SPAIN

yellow soil, and, below, the dull yellow river; above, the piled-up buildings of the town; and away at the end of the ravine, where it opens out into the plain, the graceful arches of the old bridge.

The colour of the water is peculiar: a curious dull yellow, sometimes inclining to terra-cotta, sometimes to olive green. In rainy weather it is perhaps a little redder, but I never at any time saw it clear.

Below the Bridge of San Martin the river meanders through a smiling valley. It is a fine picture from the walls just above Wamba's ancient palace, the broad, placid river, spreading out in a big horse-shoe bend amid groves of poplars.

Often on the summer evenings I used to cross the bridge and wander down the river, past the Baños de la Cava to an old mill by the water-side. As sunset drew near the distant city on its height glowed like burnished copper, till suddenly the sun

THE FASCINATION OF TOLEDO
dipped below the horizon. Then followed the most wonderful half-hour of the day.

All the hotness was gone from the light, the sky was a steely blue just flushed with a delicate pink, and the city was full of lovely tints of mother-of-pearl; then the cool grey green of the trees, the old mill showing cold and white, the river dull, deep blue, and in the foreground the pale stems of a group of birches. It was the very poetry of colouring, but oh! so fleeting. Half an hour and the stars were beginning to show, and ere one reached the Bridge of San Martin it was dark.

One such night, at a little wine-shop by the bridge, I heard some delightful old Spanish songs. The proprietor had his guitar, and, surrounded by a little group, was singing in the dark. He had a sweet tenor voice (most of the Spanish male voices are harsh and strident), and I lingered there, looking at the lights in the water, till the music

THE HEART OF SPAIN
stopped. Then home through the dark narrow streets.

I have seen Toledo in all seasons : spring, summer, autumn, winter. Spring, when the groves were full of nightingales, and everything was fresh and green ; summer, when the early harvest was ripe in the fields and the plain was one sheet of living gold ; but most beautiful of all is the autumn.

The nights are drawing in. At sunset—and the sunsets are gorgeous—the flocks of goats come trooping across the bridge with pattering little feet and a deep tinkle, tinkle, of hundreds of little bells. Behind, in a little cloud of dust and carrying perhaps a kid on his shoulder, stalks the swarthy shepherd. And now, whenever I hear the tinkle of a goat-bell, the whole scene rises before me. The evening light, the castle of San Servantes on the hill, and the patriarchal procession winding across the Bridge of Alcántara.

THE FASCINATION OF TOLEDO

I said my farewell to Toledo on an October morning. As I walked to the station, the sun was just peeping above the hills and gilding the roofs of the Zocodover. In the plain below white wreaths of mist hung low on the ground. It was cold as a winter's day. The river stretched away into the valley a pale, milky blue, with the long shadows of the trees lying a deeper tint on the water.

As the train wound slowly along I looked back at the city. The Alcázar and the houses showed straw-colour in the early sunlight, with shadowed masses of deep, clear blue; nearer, a mass of grey-green poplars; and behind, a background of cold purple mountains. Further and further distant it grew, the Alcázar standing out bold and clear, until at last an intervening hill shut it out from my sight.

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